

STARS AND STRIPES®

Report: McGwire's name came up often in steroids probe

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Actor Robin Williams

Williams lets loose in new animated film

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MONDAY, MARCH 14, 2005

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Security fears led to flag flap at school in Germany

Gelnhausen principal stopped flying Old Glory, but reaches deal with parents

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Going downhill fast

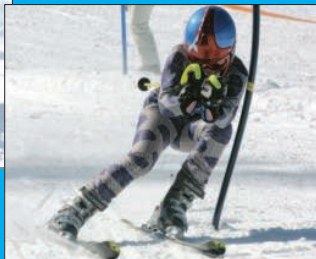
U.S. Forces Europe Ski & Snowboard Championships wrapped up Sunday

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PHOTOS BY BEN MURRAY/Stars and Stripes

Top: Men's professional division skier Leigh Plofman arcs around a gate Sunday during his first slalom run in the 2005 Chrysler U.S. Forces Europe Ski and Snowboard Championships. Right: Bamberg skier Doran Logsdon, 12, warps the final gate on the slalom course Sunday.



More teams take next dance step

Tournament coverage
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Syracuse's Hakim Warrick, left, and Craig Forth

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Prison guard hostage trial: An inmate charged with taking an Arizona prison guard hostage for 15 days plans to defend himself in his trial beginning Monday — and says he will have the woman he is accused of raping “in shreds” when he questions her on the stand.

Jury selection begins this week for Ricky Wassenaar's trial in the longest U.S. prison hostage situation in decades. Acting as his own attorney will allow Wassenaar, 41, to directly question the woman he allegedly took hostage and rape.

Wassenaar and another inmate, Steven Coy, are accused of taking two guards hostage at the Arizona State Prison Complex-Lewis in Buckeye on Jan. 18, 2004.

Boeing CEO fired: The wife of ousted Boeing CEO Harry Stonecipher has filed for divorce, less than a week after the aerospace company's board forced him out for improper conduct related to an affair with a female executive.

Joan Stonecipher, 68, cited “irreconcilable differences” in papers filed Friday in Cook County, Ill., Circuit Court. The filing comes just a month after the couple celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

War on terrorism

French journalist: French authorities have received increasing contacts and information about a French journalist taken hostage in Iraq, Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin said Sunday.

Raffarin said the stepped-up communications offered cautious hope that Liberation newspaper reporter Florence Aubenas and Hussein Hanouh al-Saadi, her Iraqi interpreter, could be freed.

Turkish detainee: The U.S. lawyer for a Turkish man who has been held at the Guantanamo Bay detention camp in Cuba said Sunday that Turkish officials have told his client's family he would be freed.

Attorney Baber Azzay said that Turkish military officials called the mother of Murat Kurmaz on Saturday and informed her that her son was being flown to a U.S. military base in Turkey.

The news comes days after Azzay told reporters in Germany, where Kurmaz was born, that his client said he had been abused while in Guantanamo.

World

West Bank settlements: Israel's Cabinet affirmed Sunday that it will dismantle 24 illegal West Bank settlement outposts, but did not give a deadline, and evaded decision on the fate of 81 more outposts, participants said.

During their weekly meeting, ministers were briefed on an official report that said successive governments helped build and expand 105 outposts over the past decade. The Cabinet adopted the report, including recommendations that new laws be passed to make it easier to dismantle outposts in the future.

Pakistan rape victim: A journalist in eastern Pakistan said Sunday that he will propose marriage to a rape victim who attracted international media attention after she went public with her ordeal.



Funeral for Chicago judge's mother: Susan Lawrence, right, a friend of the Lefkowitz family, grieves outside Saturday's memorial service for Donna Humphrey, mother of U.S. District Judge Joan Lefkowitz, in Littleton, Colo. Humphrey was found shot execution style, along with Lefkowitz's husband, in the basement of Lefkowitz's Chicago home on Feb. 28. Although the man apparently responsible for the slayings has committed suicide, at least a dozen U.S. marshals were stationed around the church and a mobile police command center had been set up as precautions.

Rana Mohammed Arshad, 30, who works for a Lahore-based Urdu-language newspaper, said that in keeping with local traditions he, his mother and one of his brothers will travel to Mukhtar Mai's village to propose to her.

Mai drew international attention when she spoke about her rape in 2002 by several men in Meerwala, Pakistan. She was ordered raped by a council of village elders after her brother was accused of having sex with another woman.



Mai

for the former Yugoslavias, has decided to give himself up after being on the run for more than five years, the authorities in Belgrade said.

Kyrgyzstan runoff election: Voters in Kyrgyzstan cast ballots on Sunday for parliamentary runoff elections amid a brewing controversy over whether the Central Asian country's longtime leader might seek to extend his rule beyond constitutional limits.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe said the first round of voting for the 75-member parliament fell short of international standards, noting instances of vote buying, questionable disqualification of candidates and interference with the media. The government has dismissed those charges.

Tajikistan vote: Tajik voters went to the polls Sunday to fill three parliamentary seats still vacant after last month's elections.

The first round of voting in the ex-Soviet republic was criticized by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as falling short of democratic standards. It said authorities largely controlled the campaign and interfered with independent media.

Chechen warlord killed: Security forces hunting down insurgents in Chechnya killed a rebel warlord Sunday, officials said.

Kantash Mansarov, whom the authorities described as the coordinator of rebel undercover operations in the Chechen capital, Grozny, was reportedly killed while resisting arrest.

Serbian war crimes suspect: Serbia's government announced Sunday that another Serb suspect, a paramilitary leader accused of atrocities against Muslims during the Bosnian war, will surrender to the United Nations war crimes tribunal.

Gjokko Jankovic, indicted by the Netherlands-based International Criminal Court

for the former Yugoslavias, has decided to give himself up after being on the run for more than five years, the authorities in Belgrade said.

Nepal attacks: Nepal's communist insurgents said Sunday threatened to step up attacks on government security forces and said they would stage road blockades and strikes across Nepal.

The elusive rebel leader Prachanda said the rebels would also follow up the regional blockades and protests with a 10-day nationwide strike beginning April 1. Prachanda, whose real name is Pushpa Kamal Dahal, said the action was called to protest King Gyanendra's Feb. 1 decision to impose emergency rule, suspending most civil liberties.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

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Security concerns lead to flag flap

BY KEVIN DOUGHERTY
Stars and Stripes

GELNHAUSEN, Germany — Although it is a bedroom community, Coleman Baracks isn't swaddled in seclusion.

The green, fenced-in housing area borders the main street running through the small German city of Gelnhausen.

There are all the telltale signs of an American military community: apartment blocks, gate guards, U.S. plated vehicles and a pedestrian spotlight for the school directly across the street.

"People know we are here, and have been for many years," said Staff Sgt. Shawn Watson.

Yet when school started last fall, the new principal believed a lower profile was in order.

Gelnhausen Elementary School practically sits on the roadway, with the front steps and flagpoles not far from the perimeter fence and curb.

So Essie Grant decided to stop flying the American flag in the name of security, a decision that irked battle-hardened veterans such as Watson.

"It's my flag," said Watson, adding he was "disgusted" by the move. "I watched (fellow soldiers) die right in front of me in Iraq and Afghanistan."

"I don't think an American flag flying is going to make a difference" in terms of se-



KEVIN DOUGHERTY/Stars and Stripes

Gelnhausen Elementary School Principal Essie Grant's decision to no longer fly the American flag in front of the school has caused a flag flap. "It's different today," Grant says. A solution is in the works, however. Grant says a work order is in to have the pole relocated to the back of the school just beyond the chess board.

curity, Watson added.

The flag flap has caused tension between Watson and some parents, though a solution in the works may help smooth things over.

Watson has accepted a parent's suggestion to move the flagpole to the back of the school between the playground and parking lot.

A work order is now pending.

"We do not want to draw too much attention to ourselves," said Grant, who then alluded to the deadly school siege in southern Russia last fall.

"The housing area is right across the street," she added. "Do you see a flag flying over there? We are just concerned about the safety of our children, and that's the bottom line."

While the issue has caused friction between school officials and some parents, both sides share a profound respect for the flag.

Grant and Watson used the word "pride" in describing what the banner represents.

The controversy underscores the balance military communities are trying to

strike in this post 9/11 world between patriotism and security.

"Flying the flag is important," said Gene Hindle, the Heidelberg School District safety and security officer, "but taking care of the children is paramount."

Once the flagpole is relocated to the back of the school, Grant intends to renew the practice of allowing fifth-grade students to serve as the guardians of the flag.

For years, they have taken turns raising and lowering the flag each school day.

The loss of that experience, Watson said, is one of the reasons why he and other parents have complained.

Marion Bliff, another concerned parent, wondered why it's taking so long to raise the flagpole at its new location.

Claudia Davenport, the parent who hatched the compromise, said she has no doubts the flagpole will be up soon.

Davenport noted that her daughter, Michaela, and other fifth graders are anxious to send Old Glory skyward.

Said Davenport: "We are getting our flag back."

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USAFE wins safety prize for second year in a row

BY SCOTT SCHONAUER
Stars and Stripes

Safety is a top priority in every military command.

But the U.S. Air Force in Europe headquarters had this year's best and most effective safety program overall across the service among major commands.

The command's safety office won the Secretary of the Air Force Safety Award for the second year in a row. The office also won in 1999.

Col. Walter Scales, the USAFE safety director, said the command has put a tremendous amount of emphasis on airman thinking about safety in everything they do, whether it is on the flight line or in their personal vehicle.

"We've a very good safety record, and we've been very pro-active," Scales said.

Last year, the command launched Project SMART, a program which stresses the importance of safety through a series of monthly themes. SMART is an acronym that stands for Smartly Managing Awareness, Risk and Threats.

The command also boasts the lowest major accident rate, or mishap rate among the major commands. The command has not had a "Class A mishap," or a major accident, in two years.

In addition to the major command award, Tech. Sgt. George Vara Jr., a weapons safety manager with the Ramstein Air Base-based 48th Air Base Wing, received the Air Force Nuclear Surety Outstanding Achievement Award.

USAFE, which is based at Ramstein, oversees 16 bases across Europe comprises 73,000 people, including about 26,000 active-duty airmen.

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Work and play



Left: Gen. B.B. Bell, commander of U.S. Army Europe, addresses soldiers over lunch Saturday at Eagle Base, Bosnia-Herzegovina. While in Bosnia, Bell also met with the leadership of NATO's Enduring Mission. Right: U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Steven Schook, commander of Enduring Mission, takes time to play some foosball with Sgt. Benjamin Chang of Task Force Orion, part of the Enduring Mission. Schook came from Camp Butmir to meet with Bell, but when Bell's arrival was delayed by an hour, Schook used that time to chat with soldiers.



NANA AVRAMOVIC/Courtesy of the U.S. Army



RICK EMERT/Stars and Stripes

Sgts. 1st Class James Kruczek and Dion Kruczek sing one of the 20 songs they wrote or compiled for a compact disc that tells the stories of soldiers on a deployment to Iraq. "These songs tell stories about courage and about the individual soldiers," James said.

Stripes Spotlight

Sgt. 1st Class James Kruczek

Sgt. 1st Class Dion Kruczek

The Kruczeks have compiled songs for a CD that, when produced, will benefit disabled veterans from Iraq deployments.

Job: Members of 1st Infantry Division Band's Enter Sandman rock band

Age: James, 38; Dion, 39

Family: Children: Danielle, 6, and Alex, 4

Stars and Stripes

1st ID couple sets soldiers' stories to music

BY RICK EMERT
Stars and Stripes

BAMBERG, Germany — During their year in Iraq that ended in February, husband and wife James and Dion Kruczek entertained the troops as part of 1st Infantry Division Band's Enter Sandman rock group.

At the same time, the two were writing and compiling songs for a compact disc that would tell the story of a soldier's deployment to Iraq.

While Dion wrote about 11 songs for the project, the other nine were written by soldiers in Iraq and recorded by Dion and James.

The project began after the division chaplain, Chap. (Lt. Col.) Mike Lemke asked Dion to write a song for a service honoring soldiers who had died in Iraq, she said.

"It was a good way for me to vent my feelings and try to do something positive," she said.

Once the project really started moving, it gave the Kruczeks something to focus on during the deployment while not busy entertaining soldiers.

"It became a way to do something positive," Dion said. "Instead of just doing our one year of duty, we wanted to do something to further validate being away from our family. This project has turned my life around."

Another driving force in compiling the songs was to combat the negativity of news stories about soldiers in Iraq, James said.

"It seemed that every story you read was something bad about what was happening there and that things were miserable," he said.

"These songs tell stories about courage and about the individual soldiers."

While Dion wrote more than half of the songs, soldiers the Kruczeks met in their travels also contributed songs, including some from Lemke and from an Australian special operations soldier who wished to remain anonymous, Dion said.

In one song, Dion wrote the music to ac-

company lyrics written by Sgt. 1st Class Shawn Mitchell, another band member, for his wife. Another was for a band member's husband who saw one of his fellow soldiers killed by a roadside bomb, she said.

Although the Kruczeks are still seeking pieces from soldiers through their Web site, www.dionkruczek.us, work is already under way to get a big name country artist to record the songs. James contacted a producer who also happens to be a former Army band member.

"I contacted him just to see if he could give us some advice," James said. "I knew him from when we were both in the Army band in the late '80s." The producer, Rogers Masson, eventually offered more than advice.

"My role in this project early on was primarily that of an advisor," Masson said in an e-mail. "Dion and Jim have the vision and forward thinking that got this thing off

the ground, and they contacted me to help carry it through to the market place."

Masson's brother, Maj. Tim Masson, was injured in Iraq last year and is recuperating in a hospital in San Antonio, he said.

"My interest is clearly a strong personal one, and there are many reasons why I am committed to this project," Masson said. "I am a veteran and feel a responsibility to help fellow veterans. This project affords me the opportunity to do just that. Also, my father was a disabled veteran, so I have firsthand knowledge of what that means. If anyone thinks this project is not important, have them visit some troops in a VA hospital."

James and Dion want the album's proceeds to benefit disabled veterans.

"There have been other songs written about soldiers, but these songs are more accurate, more sincere because they are written by soldiers," Dion said. "For a lot of people, the war is all about how many soldiers have died in Iraq. It's not just about 1,500 soldiers who died. Every one of them had a story, and they should be remembered."

E-mail Rick Emert at: emert@mail.strips.osd.mil

Study cites problems in budgeting for Navy ships

The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine — A General Accounting Office study cites problems by the Navy in budgeting for ship construction that could affect Maine and Mississippi shipyards that are in line to build the Navy's next-generation destroyer.

The new report by the investigative arm of Congress found that cost overruns could hinder efforts to modernize the fleet as money

for new ships is earmarked to pay for vessels approved years earlier.

"From fiscal years 2001 to 2005, 5 to 14 percent of the Navy's ship construction budget, which totalled about \$52 billion over the five-year period, went to pay for cost growth for ships funded in prior years," the report said.

"This reduces the buying power of the budget for current construction and can slow the pace of modernization."

"The Navy is in the early stages of buying a number of advanced ships, including the Virginia class submarine, DD(X) destroyer, CVN 21 aircraft carrier and Littoral Combat Ship," the report added.

"The Navy's ability to buy these ships as scheduled will depend on its ability to control cost growth."

Maine's Bath Iron Works and Ingalls Shipyard in Mississippi are scheduled to build the DD(X).

The Navy has drastically scaled back construction of the new ship and has announced plans to save money by having the yards take part in a winner-take-all competition for the program.

In its study, the GAO assessed eight ships under construction or just completed, including a destroyer built at Ingalls and one built at BIW. It found that Congress has appropriated \$2.1 billion so far to cover cost overruns

on the eight ships, and estimated that the number could exceed \$3 billion.

A major issue, said the GAO, was that the Navy doesn't accurately estimate the costs for the ships, so extra funds must be appropriated in following years.

A spokeswoman for Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, said her office would be talking with the Navy about the GAO's recommendations that it establish realistic estimates, prices and budgets.

Former foes meet again for Iwo Jima anniversary

U.S. and Japanese veterans pay tribute to those who died in battle 60 years ago

BY FRED ZIMMERMAN

Stars and Stripes

MIWO JIMA, Japan — Once determined to kill one another met again this weekend, but this time in peace at a ceremony to pay tribute to warriors who never left this desolate island.

More than 60 U.S. veterans of the Battle of Iwo Jima and a handful of their Japanese counterparts met at the Reunion of Honor monument on a hill overlooking Yellow Beach, where many U.S. Marines landed on Feb. 19, 1945 — the first time during the war that U.S. ground forces set foot on Japanese soil.

This year was the 60th anniversary of one of World War II's bloodiest battles. More than 100,000 U.S. troops fought to take the island, suffering more than 26,000 casualties including more than 6,800 deaths. Fewer than 1,000 of the 22,000 Japanese defenders survived.

Iwo Jima was strategically important to the U.S. bombing campaign of Japan. Once taken, fighter planes could be based there to escort bombers on missions; bombers returning crippled

could land there, possibly saving their crews from crashing or ditching at sea. By the war's end, 2,251 B-29s with 24,761 crewmen made emergency landings on the island.

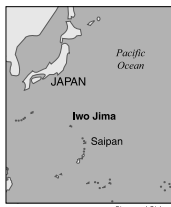
During the ceremony, retired Lt. Gen. Larry Snowden, who fought on Iwo Jima, said the Japanese defenders fought to protect their homeland while the Marines "fought to bring the end of the war and go home."

Snowden added that "hatred was the motivating force 60 years ago, but peace should breed friendship — and that's what happened in the years since."

Gen. Michael Hages, Marine Corps commandant speaking at the Iwo Jima memorial ceremonies

in World War II to remember "the war that's 60 years ago, but peace should breed friendship — and that's what happened in the years since."

Kyoshi Endo, the chairman of the Japanese Iwo Jima Veterans' Association, also spoke about remembering the past. Endo served as North Iwo Jima Division com-



Pacific Ocean

Iwo Jima

Saipan

Stars and Stripes

mandant until the end of the battle.

"Truly, memories of the tragic Battle of Iwo Jima have faded away through generations," Endo said. "Our responsibilities and duties are to dedicate the rest of our lives to passing our memories on to our next generations so that a tragic battle of this kind would never be repeated."

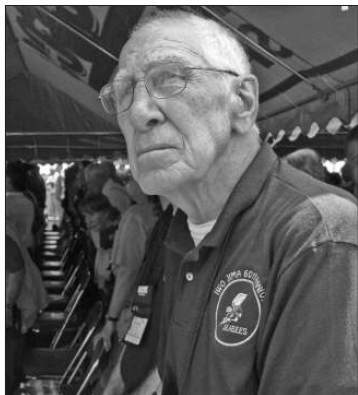
While all spoke of the tragedy of the battle, many also talked about the friendship that has been built since. Hages said grandchildren of men who fought on the island as foes now stand together as allies in Iraq and elsewhere throughout the world.

Former Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori said the two countries are working together for world peace and security. "I believe that our cooperation is a great tribute to the spirits of Japanese and American soldiers who died on this island," said Mori, who said he learned much about peace by witnessing the veterans gather in friendship.

After the speeches, U.S. and Japanese officials placed wreaths at the foot of the monument. Japanese officials made the symbolic offering to the fallen of pouring water over the marker. Rifles cracked in a 21-gun salute. The assembly then observed a 30-second moment of silence; the only sounds were of the wind blowing the grass and distant waves pounding the black beach.

As have so many other such gatherings on the desolate Pacific island, the ceremony ended with the echoing of taps.

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PHOTOS BY FRED ZIMMERMAN/Stars and Stripes

Elmer Rome stands in silence as taps is played Saturday at the 60th anniversary commemoration of the Battle of Iwo Jima on the island. As a Navy Seabee with the 133rd Naval Construction Battalion, Rome landed in the second wave on Iwo Jima. He called the black sand beach home for 17 days.

Seabee shares island memories with family

IWO JIMA, Japan — On Saturday, Elmer Rome stood again on the black sand beach of Iwo Jima that he called home for 17 days in 1945.

Sixty years ago, he first set foot on the island as a young petty officer third class with the 133rd Naval Construction Battalion. The unit, attached to the 4th Marine Division, was in the second wave of troops to land on the island — just eight minutes after the first wave. Rome said they had to jump over the landing crafts' sides and wade to shore, but he doesn't remember the water being too deep.

"We were 1,014 guys who had no idea of what we were getting into," he said. "I saw all the ones that were killed or maimed lying there on the beach," Rome said. "I was never scared and never hurt ... I was too focused on my job."

The U.S. forces were taking so many casualties that every time he and his fellow Seabees ran supplies to the front, they returned carrying stretchers bearing the wounded. He said a photo of him carrying a stretcher was on a 1945 Look magazine cover.

After living on the beach for 17

days, Rome said, the Seabees moved almost directly across the island, where they built water tanks at a desalination site. He also helped build some barracks near the site.

Rome had returned to Iwo Jima just once, in 1995, when he brought a daughter to the commemoration. This year, he brought all 10 of his children.

Rome's children said that growing up, they knew little of what their father did on Iwo Jima.

"He just wouldn't talk about it," said daughter Mary-Anne Osborne. "Until he came back for the 50th anniversary. Then he would talk about it occasionally."

Son T.J. said he'd learned things from his father this past week that he'd never heard before — such as how he went to the cemetery to visit the graves of seven friends who had died.

T.J. said the family was able to get their hands on some of his history. They found and purchased two copies of the Look magazine issue with him on the cover.

"I think they paid about \$10," said the elder Rome.

T.J. replied, "It was a lot more than \$10, dad. But you don't need to worry about how much it was."

— Fred Zimmerman



Members of the Japanese delegation pour water over the Reunion of Honor monument Saturday during the 60th anniversary commemoration of the battle of Iwo Jima.

4 Fort Knox drill sergeants charged with abusing recruits

The Associated Press

FORT KNOX, Ky. — Four Army drill sergeants were charged Friday with abusing recruits who were allegedly slammed into lockers and pulled down a hallway by their ankles. The Army said the recruits also were pushed, slapped and kicked.

The alleged abuse began when the recruits reported for duty Feb. 3 and ended

five days later, according to the Fort Knox public affairs office.

The drill sergeants were investigated after their battalion commander received reports of abuse from soldiers in an adjacent barracks.

Sgt. 1st Class David H. Price, 36; Sgt. 1st Class Ricky L. Stauffer, 35; Staff Sgt. Michael G. Rhoades, 33; and Staff Sgt.

Bryan G. Duncan, 26; were charged with maltreatment of soldiers and obstruction of justice. Price faces an additional charge of violation of a lawful regulation.

Each is to have a special court-martial, but no court dates were immediately set. The maximum punishment is a year confinement, forfeiture of two-thirds pay per month for a year, and a reduction to the

lowest enlisted grade.

When reached by telephone, Stauffer declined to comment. Phone messages left for Price and Duncan were not immediately returned Friday, and a telephone number for Rhoades could not be located.

All were assigned to Company E, 1st Battalion, 81st Armor Regiment, part of Fort Knox's 1st Armor Training Brigade.

Two U.S. contractors killed in Iraq bombing

GI gunned down in separate attack; Kurds, Shiites near completion on power-sharing deal

By TODD PITMAN

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Two American security contractors were killed and a third wounded by a roadside bomb south of the Iraqi capital on Sunday while Kurdish leaders said they were nearing completion on a deal with the dominant Shiite-led alliance on forming a coalition government at this week's National Assembly.

The three contractors were working for Blackwater Security, a North Carolina-based contracting firm that provides security for U.S. State Department officials in Iraq. They were attacked Saturday on the main road to Hillah, south of Baghdad, U.S. Embassy spokesman Bob Callahan said.

A U.S. soldier also was gunned down late Saturday in a small arms fire attack in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, the U.S. command said Sunday.

Foreign contractors, too, are often targeted by anti-U.S. guerrillas. At least 23 American civilian security and reconstruction contractors were killed in Iraq up to the end of 2004, according to the Washington-based Brookings Institution.

The State Department said it was "deeply saddened" by the deaths of the two contractors and the wounding of another.

"These men were assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Iraq to protect American diplomats. They played a vital role in our mission to bring democracy, and opportunity to the people of Iraq," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said in a statement.

The Blackwater employees were in the last vehicle in a four-vehicle convoy and were traveling to Hillah from Baghdad, Callahan said. A foreign security official said they were in a black Chevrolet Suburban. The road south traverses an area



Iraqi tribal leaders attend a conference on regional federalism Sunday in Baghdad. In political developments, the country's main Shiite and Kurdish coalitions were putting the finishing touches on an agreement they hope to sign on Monday forming a coalition government, in advance of the National Assembly convening on Wednesday.

known as the "Triangle of Death" because of the frequency of insurgent attacks.

Blackwater said the contractors, who were not identified, were attacked on a highway just southeast of Baghdad's airport. The company said the wounded employee's injuries were not life-threatening.

In March 2004, four Blackwater employees were killed in the turbulent city of Fallujah, and two of the corpses were hung from a bridge, triggering a bloody three-week siege of the restive Sunni Muslim city west of Baghdad soon afterward.

Two Iraqis also were killed and five

wounded Sunday when a roadside bomb missed a U.S. convoy in southeastern Baghdad, said Dr. Ali Karim of Kindi hospital, where the casualties were brought.

In the north, Kurdish leaders said they would go ahead with a deal they made with the Shiite-dominated United Iraqi Alliance last week to help form a coalition government when the 275-member National Assembly convenes on Wednesday.

The Kurds won 75 seats in the Assembly during Jan. 30 elections.

The alliance won 140 seats and needs Kurdish support to assemble the two-thirds

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Saturday, at least 1,513 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,153 died as a result of hostile action, according to the Defense Department. The figures include four military civilians.

The British military has reported 86 deaths; Italy, 20; Ukraine, 18; Poland, 17; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, eight; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Kazakhstan and Latvia one death each.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ No deaths reported.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ No identifications reported.

majority to elect a president, who will then give a mandate to the prime minister.

"Talks between us did not fail. Both delegations went back to review the negotiations," said Fadi Masoumi, a member of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Interim Deputy Prime Minister Barham Saleh, a Kurd, said the two sides were very close to reaching a comprehensive agreement, including the makeup of the coalition government and denied reports that their power-sharing deal had collapsed.

Reports: U.S. informed about rescue at last minute

The Associated Press

ROME — American officials in Iraq were told that an Italian intelligence officer was there to free a hostage — but only at the very last minute, shortly before U.S. troops opened fire on their vehicle, killing the officer and wounding the woman, Italian media reported Sunday.

Italian dailies cited a report now in the hands of Rome prosecutors by Maj. Gen. Mario Marioli, an Italian who is the coalition forces' second-in-command in Iraq. Marioli said U.S. authorities were aware that the officer, Nicola Calipari, and another officer were in Iraq, but only he knew why. He said Calipari told him not to tell the Americans that they were there to collect a hostage.

Italian media have speculated that the reason for not telling the Americans was due to U.S. opposition to Italy's policy of negotiating with kidnappers.

However, Marioli also said that he finally told an American officer with him at the Badad airport — a certain "Capt. Green" — after getting a call that the mission had been a success and that the two agents and freed journalist were on the ground. The way back, according to dailies Corriere della Sera, Il Messaggero and La Stampa.

Families defend GIs' actions in shooting

By CRAIG GORDON

Newsday

WASHINGTON — Families of a New York Army National Guard unit are defending its actions in the checkpoint shooting of an Italian journalist and intelligence officer, with one nervous father saying his son told him "anybody in that unit would have done the same thing."

"Nobody takes any chances," said William Bambino of Wantagh, N.Y., who spoke to his son, Pfc. Phillip Bambino, two days after the March 4 checkpoint shooting, though his son wasn't involved. "If somebody doesn't heed a warning, they don't give them a second chance. A second chance is too late."

Pfc. Bambino is part of Manhattan's 69th Infantry Regiment of the 42nd Infantry Division, which was on duty when a car carrying a freed Italian journalist and her rescuer came upon a U.S. military checkpoint on Baghdad's notorious airport road.

U.S. soldiers say they gave a series of warnings but fired when the speeding car didn't stop, wounding the journalist and killing an Italian intelligence

agent. The Italian government charges that the soldiers opened fire without warning and that the car was traveling at moderate speed. The Bush administration has pledged a full investigation.

As word of the shooting has filtered home in media reports, some families of the "Fighting 69th" say the troops are nervous. Some worry that a witch-hunt mentality could arise in the pride due to Italian calls for answers, even as the troops tell of the intense pressures and split-second decision-making needed to guard a route targeted by insurgents.

Just two days before the shooting, the 69th had lost two soldiers from Queens in a roadside bomb attack. They are among more than a dozen members of the First Battalion, 69th Regiment that have died in combat since arriving in October.

"They're all on edge," William Bambino said of his son, 23, and his fellow soldiers. Anti-U.S. attacks are "an everyday occurrence."

Some families worry it will be harder for soldiers to do their jobs for fear of being second-guessed. Already, human rights groups have stepped up criticism that U.S. checkpoint guards are too quick to shoot amid this and other recent friendly-fire slayings.

front of the car and into the car's engine block.

Italy has said the shooting was an accident, but has also disputed parts of the account given by the Americans.

The U.S.-led coalition in Iraq has ordered an investigation into the shooting, with Italian officials' participation.

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New baby a special delivery

U.S. soldiers help mother give birth on Black Hawk

BY KENT HARRIS

Stars and Stripes

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — The population of Afghanistan grew slightly Saturday, thanks in part to a pair of Black Hawk crews and a 25-year-old flight medic from Wiesbaden, Germany.

Army Spc. Kyle Storbakken helped an Afghan mother deliver a healthy 6½-pound baby while aboard the Black Hawk flying over the U.S. military base in Salerno.

"This was my first delivery," Storbakken said via a phone interview from Salerno, a remote base a few hours away by helicopter from Bagram.

It was the first such delivery that anyone associated with the current medical mission in country had knowledge of. Col. John Giddens, the commander of the 249th General Hospital at Bagram, said most Afghans the hospital sees are those critically injured by mines, accidents or attacks by anti-coalition forces.

"It's very nice to have a joyful

emergency coming through our doors," he said.

Peer Mullah Khan, the baby's father, is a leader of the village next to the U.S. outpost at Skhin. Through a translator, he said he came to U.S. troops for help when his wife started struggling during labor.

Giving birth isn't a new experience for his wife, Melawa. The baby girl, who hasn't been named yet, is the couple's 14th child. Two have died, but the others — ranging from the newest addition to a 19-year old girl — make for a large family. Two sons currently serve in the Afghan army.

American officials said they agreed to take the mother and father aboard the aircraft because it appeared that the placenta was in the birth canal, potentially putting both lives at risk. Fortunately, that turned out not to be the case.

In order to save time, one helicopter was dispatched from Salerno to Skhin to pick up the mother while another left Bagram to fly to Salerno. While the first helicopter was on its way back from the

village to Salerno, the mother gave birth.

Storbakken, assigned to the 159th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) at Wiesbaden, said he couldn't recall any specific emotions he had while helping deliver the baby.

"I guess you don't really think about what's going on until it's all over," he said.

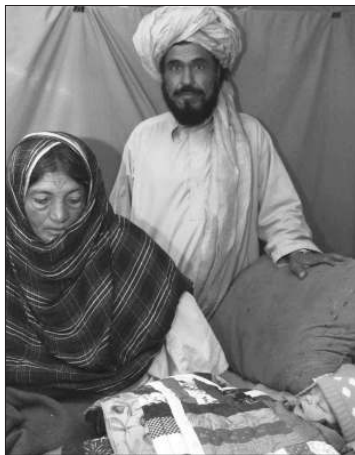
Capt. Richard Mangini, the executive officer of the 68th Medical Company, of which Storbakken is a part, said in-air births are a rarity. And it was even more special because of who was delivering the baby.

"He's our youngest and probably most inexperienced medic in terms of time on the job," he said. Storbakken said he's already received several good-natured jabs by his peers.

"Some of the guys have been calling me daddy," he said.

The real father and mother were expected to travel back to Salerno from Bagram on Monday with the newest member of their family.

E-mail Kent Harris at: harris.k@mail.stripes.osd.mil



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Peer Mullah Khan stands with his wife, Melawa, and their newborn daughter in a 249th General Hospital ward at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. The baby was born Saturday in a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter.

Army doctor trying to bring boy to U.S.

BY CHARLIE COON

Stars and Stripes

BAQUBA, Iraq — Abbasi isn't like most 3-year-old boys.

He hardly ever smiles or talks. Abbasi often runs a fever of 106 degrees, and when he lays down on his back, the outline of his swollen spleen can be seen pushing through his stomach.

"I was with him the one time he smiled," said Spc. Penny Gainer. "It was my happiest moment since he has been here."

Qais Abbas, better known as Abbasi, is suffering from something that can't be pinpointed by the Iraqi doctors in Baquba or the American ones at Forward Operating Base Warhorse.

So Dr. (Capt.) Matthew J. Carter, a pediatrician at the Teal Medical Aid Station, is pulling strings to have Abbasi flown for treatment to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

Abbasi, the son of a coalition-friendly tribal sheik or village leader, is thought to be suffering from leukemia or another disease that has caused his spleen and liver to swell and his blood counts to be dangerously low.

Abbasi's enlarged spleen gives his lungs less room to work, Carter said, making the boy work a little harder for every breath he takes.

Transporting Abbasi to the states for diagnosis and treatment has to be justified to the Defense Department or both.

"We don't want to advertise that we can help every kid in town," he said. Doing so, Carter said, would undercut the Iraqi's own medical providers.

"But this is a very sick kid, and we care," he added. Carter said he hoped a decision would be made within a week or two.



CHARLIE COON/Stars and Stripes

Dr. (Capt.) Matthew J. Carter holds Qais Abbas, better known as Abbasi. Carter is trying to get approval for Abbasi to be flown to Washington, D.C., for diagnosis of an undetermined medical condition.

State Department or

The Teal clinic is part of Company C, 203rd Forward Support Battalion, part of the 42nd Infantry Division's Task Force Liberty. Its Level 2 care capabilities enable the staff to treat everyday sick calls, sprains and strains, dehydration and some casualties of war.

It has operating and trauma rooms. In its first three weeks of operation, the staff treated 392 patients, including 112 Iraqis.

Some of the staff have adopted Abbasi as one of their own. Gainer, of Cary, Ill., cradles Abbasi during the night shift, while Spc. Joy Maine of Snohomish, Wash., handles the day care.

"The first time I saw him I felt really bad because he looked really sick," Maine said. "Sometimes I'll take him outside for fresh air to get him out of his bed."

On Thursday the staff threw a little party for Abbasi, his third birthday. His gifts included a big, red stuffed bear, some clothes and other goodies.

Col. Steven Salazar, commander of the Warhorse-based 3rd Brigade Combat Team, said the request to transport Abbasi to Washington for treatment was a good use of U.S. taxpayer dollars.

"With all the dollars going into the overall fight, the dollars spent to take care of this boy is less than a drop in the bucket," Salazar said. "But it means a lot to the boy and a lot to a lot of people in the province of Diyala."

Abbasi is one of 22 children of Sheikh Ahmed Abdul al-Abdullah, a Shiite, thought to be a translator. "And then I trust the American physicians to help my son be better."

E-mail Charlie Coon at: coon.c@mail.stripes.osd.mil

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Rights group: Abuses by U.S. date back '02

By VERENA DOBNIK
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Unreleased U.S. Army reports detailing the beating deaths of two Afghan men at the hands of American soldiers show that military prison abuses began in Afghanistan in 2002, and were part of a systematic pattern of mistreatment, a human rights representative said Saturday.

More than two dozen American soldiers face possible criminal prosecution — and one already is charged with manslaughter — in the deaths at the main U.S. detention facility in Bagram, just north of the Afghan capital of Kabul.

As documented by the Army's Criminal Investigation Command, the men died a year before the photographed horrors at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, according to John Sifton, the Afghanistan researcher for the New York-based Human Rights Watch.

In a phone interview, Sifton said his group had obtained 20 pages of electronically scanned Army reports.

The American Civil Liberties Union said to obtain the case files under the Freedom of Information Act, but the Army withheld portions of the records because of an ongoing investigation and possible charges.

On Saturday, a Pentagon spokesman, Lt. Col. Jeremy May, said that only that the cases from 2002 "were thoroughly investigated and people were punished appropriately."

"The Bush Administration and the Pentagon describe the abuse problems as isolated incidents, not systematic, not part of a plan. He evidence shows otherwise," Sifton said. "Far from being isolated incidents, these beatings were part of a pattern of abuse."

Members of the 51st Military Intelligence Battalion who set up intelligence operations at the Bagram facility did the same at the Abu Ghraib prison.

The two Afghan detainees died in December 2002 — a week apart — as reported in Army memos, with updates detailing their fate after they were captured by Afghan forces and handed to the U.S. military.

There were several other deaths of Afghans in American custody before December 2002, Sifton said, "and we want more information."

"It's amazing," he said. "Nobody has been punished for this. The command has recommended that 29 people be prosecuted for this, but only two have been charged so far."

The unreleased Army documents detail U.S. military investigations of the deaths of a man named Mullah Habibullah, about 30, and another identified only as Durrani, a 22-year-old taxi driver with a 2-year-old daughter, according to Sifton.

The Army has publicly acknowledged the two deaths and announced in October that up to 28 U.S. soldiers face possible charges in connection with what were ruled homicides.

U.S. ready to face criticism of prison abuses by military

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The annual meeting of the U.N. Human Rights Commission opens on Monday in Geneva with the United States prepared to confront critics ready to highlight the abuses by U.S. military personnel of Iraqi, Afghan and other prisoners.

In previous years, the United States has been free to focus on the rights shortcomings of other countries at commission meetings.

But continuing disclosures about prisoner mistreatment dating back to last spring have required the administration to adopt a defensive strategy for the coming six-week conference.

As part of a damage control plan, U.S. delegates have devised a pro-active approach for the meeting. They will point to American efforts to hold accountable those responsible for behavior that the administration acknowl-

edges has been reprehensible, U.S. officials say.

The scandals have triggered a spate of investigations and some low-level personnel have been punished. But thus far, senior military officers and civilian Pentagon officials have escaped blame. Earlier this year, Cuba and Zimbabwe served on a five-nation working group assigned to set part of the agenda for this year's meeting.

Cuba tried to get fellow working group members to get the U.S. prisoner abuse scandal on the agenda, but the effort fell short by a 3-1 vote, with Zimbabwe abstaining. This, however, will not prevent that issue from being a resolution at the commission's deliberations.

Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque raised the possibility last week that the U.N. will introduce a resolution at the commission condemning the United States for prisoner mistreatment.



Johnny Spann, father of slain CIA officer Mike Spann, pauses at his son's gravesite at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va. The younger Spann was the first American to die after the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan.

Slain CIA agent's father hunts for answers about son's death

By JEFFREY MCMURRAY
The Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Va. — Johnny Spann stood in gently falling snow and wistfully recalled the day his son, CIA officer Johnny Michael "Mike" Spann, died among the tombstones at Arlington National Cemetery, studying each inscription and testing his sister Tanya's patience.

"Mike, let's go," she implored. "They're all the same."

"No, Tanya, they're not," the younger Spann replied. "There are stories behind them."

It is Mike Spann's story that draws Johnny Spann to Arlington now.

There is no greater objective for the grieving father these days than gathering the facts behind the uprising on Nov. 25, 2001, at the makeshift prison in Afghanistan where his son became the first American casualty of the Afghan war.

Spann, a 56-year-old real estate company owner from Winfield, Ala., visited Mike Spann's grave last month for the third time in as many days. The elder Spann placed flowers and contemplated the chain of events that put his son in a national cemetery.

Upon returning to his rental car at the roadside, he wiped tears from his eyes.

"Even after four years, it doesn't get any easier," Spann said.

Articulate and folksy, with combed-back hair that is two shades of gray, Spann thrusts through a sheaf of documents and explains his son's last living moments with methodical calm. It is the same trait he displayed daily at the trial of John Walker Lindh, the American fighting alongside the Taliban.

Spann is conducting his own investigation into the origins of the riot at the prison in Mazar-e-Sharif where suspected Taliban supporters were held.

U.S. government agencies, Spann said, are not inclined to piece together the entire story.



Spann

By investigating for himself, "No lies get told and nothing gets covered up," he said. "I've got more at stake than he have. I want to know."

During his visit to Washington, Spann shared with The Associated Press a videotape that shows the two hours leading up to the fatal riot.

Spann contends the last two minutes of footage prove the uprising began with a planned grenade attack inside the prison building rather than a spontaneous scuffle outside where his son was interviewing prisoners, including Lindh.

The distinction could be critical in Lindh's quest to get clemency for his 20-year prison term. One of the most serious charges against Lindh was that the uprising was planned the night before, yet he did not warn Spann.

At trial, Lindh claimed no knowledge of the riot plot. The judge seemed to agree. If there were evidence that Lindh was responsible for the younger Spann's death, the judge said, then a plea bargain would not have been accepted that spared Lindh more serious charges, such as murder or treason.

Spann's father is convinced that such evidence exists. He refers to Lindh as "hard core al-Qaida" and says if Lindh really wanted to help a fellow American, he would have spoken up that morning.

Because he did not, Spann contends, Lindh was complicit in the younger Spann's death. Some day, the father is hoping to prove this legally, in an attempt to get Lindh's plea bargain thrown out.

An intelligence official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the circumstances surrounding the incident at the prison were reviewed. The official said some prisoners burst out of the building firing weapons while Spann and a colleague were interviewing prisoners outside.

Spann said the doctors told him that his son charged toward the prison building — right into a trap — when the grenade went off.

Later, Spann said, he reviewed autopsy reports that showed his son had two bullet wounds to the head. That indicates a method of death consistent with an execution-style slaying, Spann said.

"That doesn't sound like two people in a fight getting shot," Spann said. "That sounds like one guy is on his knees or something getting shot."

Two Marines wounded

KABUL, Afghanistan — Militants armed with rockets and machine guns ambushed Marines patrolling in eastern Afghanistan, wounding two of the American troops, the military said Sunday.

The patrol came under attack on Saturday in an area north of

the city of Jalalabad and close to the Pakistani border, the U.S. military said. The assaults quickly retreated, it said.

The two injured Marines continued with their mission after treatment at the scene for shrapnel wounds.

U.S. and Afghan government troops clash regularly with militants in southern and eastern Af-

ghanistan, where Taliban-led rebels have maintained a stubborn insurgency since 2001.

While attacks have declined in recent months, Taliban officials have vowed to step up their campaign with the melt of the winter snow, despite high-profile peace overtures from U.S. commanders and Afghan leaders.

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IN THE WORLD

Pope leaves Rome hospital

BY AIDAN LEWIS
The Associated Press

ROME — With thousands cheering him on, Pope John Paul II returned to the Vatican on Sunday, two weeks after undergoing throat surgery to ease his breathing problems and hours after greeting pilgrims in a raspy voice that raised hopes he would fully recover.

The 84-year-old pope crossed himself just before he left Rome's Gemelli Polyclinic hospital in a gray Mercedes minivan with tinted windows rather than in the glass-paneled popemobile he used after a previous hospitalization last month.

Patients in robes ventured out onto their balconies to bid the

pope farewell, and cries of "Viva il Papa!" ("Long live the pope!") were heard as the van made the trip back to the Holy See.

Earlier Sunday, the pope spoke just a few words to the faithful gathered beneath his 10th-floor hospital suite, waving and making the sign of the cross with a steady hand.

"Dear brothers and sisters, thank you for your visit," he said, reading from a sheet of paper. "To everyone, have a good Sunday and a good week."

It was the first time since his Feb. 24 operation to insert a breathing tube in his windpipe that John Paul addressed the faithful in remarks carried live. In three previous appearances, the pope had remained silent.

The Vatican's brief statement announcing his release made clear that the pope was not cured but was well enough to continue his recovery back at St. Peter's.

The Holy See had said last week that John Paul would be released in time for Holy Week celebrations, which begin on March 20 with Palm Sunday and culminate a week later with Easter.

The Holy See did not say whether the breathing tube had been removed or replaced with another type designed to make it easier for him to speak. Its next health update was expected on Monday.

The pope's speaking difficulties are complicated by Parkinson's disease, raising concerns over John Paul's ability to communicate and guide the world's 1 billion Roman Catholics.



Pope John Paul II waves Sunday as he arrives at the Vatican after leaving Gemelli Polyclinic hospital, in Rome. Seated behind him is Sister Luisa. The pontiff had been hospitalized with a breathing crisis.

Europeans probe CIA role in transferring suspects for torture

BY CRAIG WHITLOCK
The Washington Post

MILAN, Italy — A radical Egyptian cleric known as Abu Omar was walking to a Milan mosque for noon prayers in February 2003 when he was grabbed on the sidewalk by two men, sprayed in the face with chemicals and stuffed into a van. He hasn't

been seen since.

Milan investigators, however, appear to be close to identifying his kidnappers. Last month, officials showed up at Aviano Air Base in northern Italy and demanded records of any American planes that had flown into or out of the joint U.S.-Italian military installation around the time of the abduction. They also asked for logs of vehi-

cles that had entered the base.

Italian authorities suspect the Egyptian was the target of a CIA-sponsored operation known as rendition, in which terrorism suspects are forcibly taken for interrogation to countries where torture is practiced.

The Italian probe is one of three official investigations that have surfaced in the

past year into renditions believed to have taken place in Western Europe. Although the CIA usually carries out the operations with the help or blessing of friendly local intelligence agencies, law enforcement authorities in Italy, Germany and Sweden are examining whether U.S. agents might have broken local laws by detaining terrorist suspects on European soil and subjecting them to abuse or maltreatment.

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Some say U.N. rights commission needs reform to regain credibility

By SAM CAGE
The Associated Press

GENEVA — The U.N. Human Rights Commission must reform itself to restore its sinking credibility, say rights groups who accuse the worst-offending countries of using their membership in the agency to protect each other from condemnation.

"The commission has become a refuge for governments like Sudan, which should be in the dock rather than on the top U.N. rights body," said Kenneth Roth, executive director of the New York-based Human Rights Watch.

The U.N. commission — which starts its annual six-week session Monday — must address long-standing problems, in particular that some of its 53 member states "routinely resort to double standards in addressing country situations," officials of Amnesty International said.

Several possible changes have been suggested, including extending participation in the watchdog agency to all U.N. members, or excluding those with poor records of their own.

Under U.N. rules, members are picked by regional groups. Current member states that have been criticized for their records include China, Cuba, Nepal, Russia and Zimbabwe.

"The commission must focus on protecting human rights, instead of blocking criticism of members that commit serious rights abuses," Roth told reporters last week.

A high-level U.N. panel has reported that the commission's ability to promote respect for human rights "has been undermined by eroding credibility."

About half the commission's current members will attend this session "not to promote human rights, but to undermine them,"

and this is reducing the credibility of the whole United Nations organization, Roth said.

"There is a question of whether the commission in its current form is a viable method of protecting human rights," Roth told reporters.

The most important issue at this year's meeting is the threat to human rights posed by governments' anti-terror campaigns, Roth said.

Campaigners called on the commission to condemn treatment of detainees by the United States and to ask that Washington give independent monitors access to terrorism suspects. Human Rights Watch is asking the commission to appoint a monitor with a three-year mandate to address terror and counter-terror issues.

"Exclusion of evidence (obtained through torture) is another matter we hope the commission will give due attention to," Amnesty's Peter Splinter said.



A communist supporter holds a poster addressed to President Bush during a demonstration Sunday against the Syrian withdrawal of troops from Lebanon.

AP

No schedule yet for Syrian troops to exit Lebanon

By HUSSEIN DAKROUB
The Associated Press

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Syria has withdrawn nearly a third of its troops from Lebanon, a senior officer said Sunday, but the Lebanese foreign minister said a date for a complete withdrawal would not be set until a meeting of the military leadership of the two countries scheduled for April 7.

Meanwhile, a pro-Syrian rally organized by Hezbollah drew at least 100,000 protesters in the southern market town of Nabatieh. They burned Israeli flags and waved posters of Syrian President Bashar Assad — the second such rally the militant Shiite Muslim group has sponsored in a week.

The senior Syrian officer said about 4,000 soldiers had crossed the border into Syria since the pullout began on Tuesday and the remaining 10,000 were in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley.

"Another 4,000 soldiers in Lebanon's central mountains have been deployed to the Bekaa region. This is in addition to 6,000 troops

already stationed in the Bekaa," the military official said on condition of anonymity. He said the fate of the 10,000 troops remaining in the Bekaa would be discussed by the April 7 military commission.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Mahmoud Hamoud also said the joint military commission would set the "duration, time and location in these matters." Hamoud did not mention a specific date for the meeting, but the officer said it was to be held on April 7.

Hamoud made his remarks after meeting with U.N. envoy Terje Roed-Larsen in Beirut, a day after Roed-Larsen had visited Assad.

President Bush, who repeatedly has called for a full Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, wants Syria to move out before Lebanon's parliamentary elections scheduled to take place in April and May.

Asked if the final withdrawal could take place before the elections, Hamoud said it was up to the joint military commission to decide.

Iran: Europe going too slowly on nuke talks

By TAREK AL-ISSAWI
The Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran said Sunday its nuclear talks with Europe were moving too slowly, adding that it didn't rule out negotiations with Washington as long as America recognizes Tehran's right to a peaceful nuclear program.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said a permanent halt of Iran's nuclear activities was out of the question but said it was not yet ready to declare the "complicated and difficult" talks with Europeans a failure.

"Talks with Europe have not met our satisfaction yet," Asefi told reporters. "The talks are taking longer than we expected."

Iranian officials have previously accused European negotiators of wasting time and not making proposals that conform to the Iranian bottom line — that it will develop peaceful nuclear technology.

The crux of the negotiations, Asefi said, involves securing European approval for a nuclear program built with guarantees that the technology won't be diverted toward weapons.

Washington insists Tehran's uranium enrichment program is aimed at developing a bomb, not merely providing an alternative energy source.

"We are not seeking nuclear weapons," Asefi said. "We announce again that nuclear weapons have no place in our defense and security doctrine."

Talks between Iran and Britain, Germany and France, who negotiate on behalf of the European Union, ended without result last week. The two sides have agreed to meet again March 23.

Asefi said Iran might agree to direct negotiations with the United States if Washington acknowledged Tehran's right to develop nuclear technology. Otherwise, U.S. entry into the negotiations would likely cause them to fail.

On Saturday, Asefi rejected U.S. overtures aimed at coaxing Tehran to drop its nuclear ambitions.

The mild concessions, announced earlier by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, include dropping opposition to Iran's application for membership in the World Trade Organization and allowing the sale of some spare parts for civilian aircraft.

National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley insisted the United States is not offering concessions to Iran.

"What we are doing is removing some objections to something the Europeans are doing," Hadley said on "Fox News Sunday." "But I do not think that the Iranian regime can take much comfort in this because as part of this arrangement, the Europeans now for the first time are talking about Iranian support to terror and the need for this Iranian regime to listen to their people and to give them a greater role in the political process."

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March 16, 2005



China testing AIDS vaccine on humans

The Associated Press

BEIJING — China has begun conducting the first stage of testing of a new AIDS vaccine on eight volunteers, the government said.

The testing began Saturday, when the volunteers received physical checkups and signed waivers, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

A total of 49 volunteers between the ages of 18 and 50 will be part of the tests, to take place in three stages, said Xinhua, citing Chen Jie, director of the disease control agency in southern China's Guangxi region.

The first stage of testing will last 14 months, Xinhua said. It didn't say what the stage was meant to test, but said the second would cover the "immune nature and safety of the vaccine."

The agency didn't give any other details of the tests.

Chinese drug regulators approved the tests last November.

At that time, state media said the vaccine, already tested on monkeys, was developed by Chinese scientists who have studied the genetics of the AIDS virus since 1996.

China says it has 840,000 people infected with the

AIDS virus and 80,000 with the full-blown disease. But health experts say the true figures are much higher and warn that China could have 10 million people infected by 2010 unless it takes urgent action.

After years of denying that the disease was a problem, the communist government has become more open about its AIDS epidemic, though activists are still regularly detained and harassed.

In the world's biggest study of an experimental AIDS vaccine, Thai and U.S. researchers have been testing a combination of two drugs on 16,000 Thai volunteers since 2003.



An Albanian man, joined by his family, looks at the ballot paper Sunday during Macedonia's municipal elections in the village of Zafaj. Fights broke out at four polling stations, causing voting to be postponed.

Fights at polls delay Macedonian voting

The Associated Press

SKOPJE, Macedonia — Scuffles between election workers shut down at least three Macedonian polling stations Sunday as voters cast ballots in municipal elections — the first held under reforms intended to help the ethnically tense republic forge closer ties with Europe.

Election Commission spokesman Zoran Taneski said fights broke out at four stations, one near the capital, Skopje, and three in other parts of the country. One of them remained open, he said, but he did not specify which one.

He described the incidents as minor and said voting in the three districts affected by the closures would be postponed until March 27. He said no problems were reported at the other nearly 3,000 polling stations nationwide.

International observers are in the former Yugoslav republic to monitor the poll to elect local government officials in new municipalities created following an ethnic Albanian rebel insurgency four years ago.

An internationally brokered cease-fire paved the way for the reforms.

Ethnic Albanians, demanding minority-rights guarantees from

the majority Macedonian Slavs, will gain greater autonomy under the reformed local government system with expanded control over schools, law enforcement and taxation.

"The most important thing for Macedonia and all of us is to have peaceful, fair and democratic elections today," President Branko Crvenkovski said after voting near the capital, Skopje.

"This will be ... a big step forward toward our strategic goal, a place in Europe."

Nearly 400 candidates from dozens of political parties are participating in mayoral races in 85 municipalities, including Skopje.

Two-term Skopje Mayor Risto Pevco, a 47-year-old Liberal Democrat, is facing a challenge from opposition-backed businessman Trifun Kostovski, 58, in a campaign marred by corruption allegations from both sides.

But Macedonia's elections are as much about low living standards as they are about resolving ethnic divisions.

"The vast majority of people here see these elections as a test of the nation's democratic maturity," Pande Lazarevski, director of the Macedonian Institute for Social, Science and Political Research, said.

Rice entering diplomatic fray to lure N. Korea back to talks

BY BURT HERMAN

The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — Condoleezza Rice is the latest entrant in a flurry of Asian diplomacy aimed at luring North Korea back to disarmament talks, with the two-year-old crisis at a new high since the North claimed last month it has nuclear weapons and would boycott the deadlocked talks.

The U.S. secretary of state's trip starting Monday to China, Japan and South Korea is her first to the region since taking the top spot at the State Department, and is to "review with our partners our diplomatic efforts to convene the next round of six-party talks," spokesman Richard Boucher said.

Since the North claimed on Feb. 10 that it has nuclear weapons and would stay away from the nuclear

negotiations, the other countries involved in the talks — China, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the United States — have sent envoys scurrying across the continent.

But breakthroughs and bold proposals have been scarce, as with evidence proving the North really has nuclear bombs.

It was Rice's comment during her confirmation hearings, grouping North Korea among the world's "outposts of tyranny" that the North seized on as a reason for shutting the nuclear talks. The North has

also taken President Bush's sweeping rhetoric on spreading freedom around the world as tacitly aimed at the overthrow of Kim Jong Il's regime.

And North Korea is sure to scrutinize the Bush administration's recent nomination of one of the North's most outspoken critics — top arms control official John Bolton — as its ambassador to the United Nations.

North Korea might worry that Bolton will press the U.N. Security Council for sanctions against the North, said Peter Beck, Seoul-based director of the North East Asia Project for the International Crisis Group think tank.

The North has hinted at possible compromises. Kim Jong Il told a visiting Chinese diplomat his country would return to the talks if the United States shows "trustworthy sincerity."



Rice

Italy bombing injures child

ROME — An explosion at a church in northeastern Italy during Sunday Mass seriously injured a 6-year-old child and raised fears that an unknown bomber active in the area had struck again.

Two other people had slight injuries. Investigators said the cause of the explosion at the Roman Catholic church in Motta di Livenza was still unclear. However, the town's mayor said officials suspected the perpetrator was the "Italian Unabomber," who is believed responsible for a dozen explosions in the area over the past decade.

Germany looks to reduce its EU costs

FRANKFURT, Germany — German Finance Minister Hans Eichel said in an interview released Sunday that he wants to reduce his nation's contributions to the European Union, citing the burden of paying for Germany's reunification.

Speaking to Focus weekly ahead of next week's EU finance ministers' meeting on the 2007-2013 budget, Eichel said that no country should have to contribute more than 1 percent of its gross national income to Brussels.

From The Associated Press

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IN THE STATES

Gunman kills 7, self at Wis. hotel

BY RYAN NAKASHIMA
The Associated Press

BROOKFIELD, Wis. — Police have found no clear motive for why a man opened fire with a handgun during an evangelical church service at a hotel, killing seven people before taking his own life.

Investigators found no suicide note or any other documents that could tell them what led to the shooting rampage Saturday in this Milwaukee suburb, Police Chief Daniel Tusaus said Sunday.

Terry Ratzmann, 44, fired 22 shots, stopping once to reload, and then shot himself in the head at the Sheraton hotel, Tusaus said.

About 50 to 60 people were sitting in a meeting room when Ratzmann walked in from the back and started firing, Tusaus said.

Witnesses told police he didn't say anything before he fired.

"At this point, we're unable to determine if he had specific targets or he just shot at random," police Capt. Phil Horter said.

Police searched Ratzmann's home in New Berlin, about two miles from the hotel, and seized three computers and a rifle, Horter said.

Investigators were looking into reports that Ratzmann became



From left to right, Chelsey Porth, Kaitlin Schaeren, Ariel Reuter and Kelly Rooney, all of New Berlin, Wis., leave flowers outside the Sheraton Hotel Saturday, in Brookfield, Wis. A gunman opened fire Saturday at a church service being held at the hotel, killing seven and himself and wounding several others, police said.

upset during a church service a few weeks ago and walked out, and he also may have been about to lose his job, Horter said.

Ratzmann was affiliated with the Living Church of God, which had been meeting at the hotel every Saturday morning for four

or five years.

"This is a terrible tragedy. We are cooperating with the authorities to find out what happened," the Charlotte, North Carolina-based group said on its Web site.

At one point during the shooting, a friend of Ratzmann's confronted him and pleaded with him to stop shooting, Horter said. Tusaus did not identify the victims but gave approximate ages.

Two boys ages 15 and 17, a 72-year-old man and a 55-year-old woman died at the hotel. Three men ranging in age from 44 to 58 died later at a hospital.

Four other people were hospitalized in serious condition.

After the shootings, police removed a pickup truck from the hotel parking lot.

New Berlin Mayor Telefore Wysocki said police told him the gunman lived with his mother and sister, who were being interviewed by officers as police collected evidence at their house.

"We are in total shock and disbelief," the mayor said.

Neighbors said Ratzmann was a devout churchgoer and avid gardener who built his own greenhouse and shared homegrown vegetables with his neighbors.

Tsunami center sued by survivors, victims' kin

The Associated Press

HONOLULU — The federal agency that operates the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center is being sued by Indian Ocean tsunami survivors and relatives of victims.

The suit alleges the center in Ewa Beach and other defendants did not do enough to protect people from the Dec. 26 tsunami, which killed as many as 300,000 people throughout southern Asia.

The lawsuit asks the court to preserve evidence for the plaintiffs so they can decide whether to pursue damages, an attorney said.

"At least they should have the option to know what is going on," said Edward Fagan, the U.S. attorney for the plaintiffs.

The lawsuit claims the Thai government is destroying and concealing evidence that will prove its officials knew of the approaching tsunami. The suit was filed last week.

Named as defendants are the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Thailand's government, its Meteorological Department and the Acor group, the French owner of the Sofitel hotel chain in Phuket, Thailand.

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Rice reiterates: 'I will not run for president'

BY MIKE ALLEN
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice described herself Friday as "mildly pro-choice" and "kind of libertarian" on abortion as she once again ruled out running for president.

Rice told The Washington Times last week she "can't imagine" running to succeed her boss

and that she is "not trying to be elected." But she said she knows people are talking about the possibility, and did not rule it out when pressed repeatedly. The State Department released a transcript of the interview Saturday.

She closed the door in appearances on Sunday talk shows, telling NBC's "Meet the Press" "I will not run for president of the United States."

"I won't run," she told ABC's "This Week." "I won't. How's that? Is that categorical enough?"

The Republican platform is strongly anti-abortion, and abortion opponents play a big role in many primaries. Rice explicated her views when a questioner from the newspaper told her that the running record was murky.

"If you go back to 2000 when I helped the president in the cam-

paign," she said, "I said that I was, in effect, kind of libertarian on this issue. And meaning by that, that I have been concerned about a government role in this issue. I am a strong proponent of parental choice — of parental notification. I am a strong proponent of a ban on late-term abortion. These are all things that I think unite people and I think that that's where we should be. I've called myself at times mildly pro-choice."

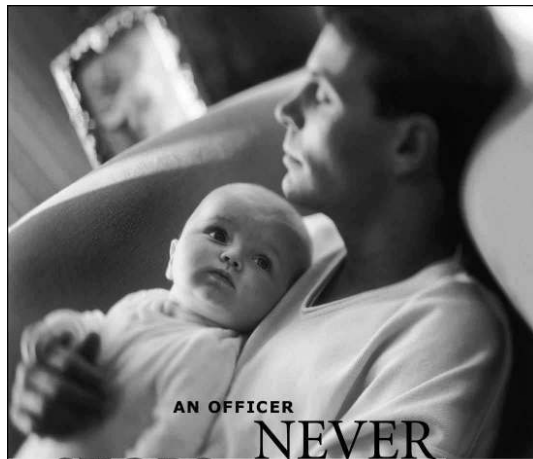
Many Republicans have expressed curiosity about her views on social issues as she assumed a higher profile and as it became increasingly clear that the early field for 2008 had no obvious Bush successor.

Rice's image-conscious staff has refined the way she is portrayed on television compared to her predecessor, Colin Powell. In-

stead of taking questions with foreign dignitaries in front of the State Department's glass doors, she appears in the monumental Benjamin Franklin State Dining room, with Corinthian columns. She meets photographers in front of a fireplace that evokes the Oval Office, and has given many more interviews to U.S. and international reporters on overseas trips.

Some political operatives relish the idea of Rice taking on Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., in 2008. One of the Washington Times questioners said, "You could save us from Hillary." "Oh, jeez," Rice said when the question was raised. "I'm going to try to be a really good secretary of state. I'm going to work really hard at it. I have enormous respect for people who do run for office. It's really hard for me to imagine myself in that role."

The Associated Press contributed to this report.



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Family, friends in awe over shooting

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Two pictures have emerged of the man police say went on a bloody rampage through Atlanta — allegedly killing a judge and as many as three others before his arrest Saturday at a suburban apartment complex.

Family members describe Brian Nichols as a "good person" who came from a stable home and avoided the temptations of the street.

Former classmates and coaches, on the other hand, recall him as a physically intimidating martial arts expert with a knack for trouble.

Police say Nichols, a former computer technician who was on trial for rape, overpowered a female sheriff's deputy Friday and shot and killed Judge Rowland Barnes, who was presiding over his case. He also is accused of killing the judge's court reporter and a deputy who tried to stop him as he fled the downtown courthouse.

Nichols is also a suspect in the shooting death of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agent David Wilhelm, whose body was found Saturday in north Atlanta.

"We're trying to understand this whole thing," Nichols' sister-in-law Feliza Nichols said from her home in the Plantation, Fla.

Nichols' mother, Clathera, is a retired IRS worker, and his father, Gene, was an entrepreneur, their daughter-in-law said. They raised their sons in Maryland, sending them to private schools and to college.

Nichols was briefly a student at Kutztown University in eastern Pennsylvania. He left the university in the fall semester of his sophomore year. Nichols was arrested at least three times during his short stay at the university.



Brian Nichols

Nick Pergine, who played football with Nichols at Kutztown, said Nichols' massive physical presence and martial arts skills earned him a reputation as someone to be careful around. "He was a bad dude," Pergine said. "You didn't mess with him."

In 1990, Nichols was charged with terroristic threats, simple assault, disorderly conduct and harassment, stemming from an incident in a university dining hall, according to court documents.

Nichols' last known job was working as a computer technician for a subsidiary of Atlanta-based shipping giant UPS. Company spokesman Norm Black says Nichols joined the unit in March 2004 and left in September 2004, which was when he was arrested in the rape case.

Feliza Nichols says the portrait of her 33-year-old brother-in-law as a bloodthirsty killer doesn't make sense.

"He's a good person," she said. "He didn't come from a broken home. He's not a person who hung out in the streets and was always in jail. He came up living a good life."



Scientists say mysterious Western light was a meteor

The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Dozens of residents in the Pacific Northwest reported seeing a bright streak of light as it flashed across the sky, startling witnesses from southern Oregon to the Seattle area, officials said.

Scientists said the flaming object was probably a meteor, and that it likely disintegrated before any fragments fell into the Pacific Ocean.

"It was like a big ball of fire," said Summer Jensen, who was in her living room Saturday night when she saw the flash of light outside her Portland home.

Michael O'Connor, a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration's regional office in Renton, Washington, said he fielded numerous calls from people reporting they had seen a bright streak across the sky.

He said police, pilots and some air traffic controllers described it as "a green ball of fire with a long tail."

"It appears to have come down over the ocean," said Dick Pugh of the Cascadia Meteorite Laboratory in Portland.

He said the object flew over the Pacific Coast, streaking along from south to north.

Jim Todd, planetarium director at the Oregon Museum of Science & Industry, said that if a meteor had entered the atmosphere during the day, it may not even have been noticed.

"It creates a bright contrast against the night sky," Todd said.

AP photos
Left: Marchers gather on the steps of the state Capitol in Montgomery, Ala. Above: The Rev. Joseph Lowery, a co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, appears Saturday.

Extension of Voting Rights Act urged

Weeklong re-enactment of historic Alabama march ends with appeals

BY SAMIRA JAFARI

The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Black politicians must urge Congress to extend the Voting Rights Act, civil rights leaders said Saturday at the finale of the re-enactment of the Selma-to-Montgomery march that helped lead to passage of the law.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 "was the single most significant piece of legislation in the century," the Rev. Joseph Lowery, a co-founder of the Atlanta-based Southern Christian Leadership Conference, told a crowd of nearly 300 marchers at the state Capitol.

In 1965, no blacks held major office in Alabama, University of Alabama political scientist William Stewart said.

By 2001, there were more than 755 black elected officials in Alabama, according to the most recent figures available from the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

Across the South, the number has grown from 70 to nearly 7,000.

The first voting rights march was halted at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma by state troopers and sheriff's deputies who attacked activists with clubs and tear gas on March 7, 1965, "Bloody Sunday."

A second march two weeks later was led by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and had the protection of a federal court order.

Marchers went from the bridge over the Alabama River to the steps of the state Capitol in Montgomery.

The attack and the marches inspired passage of the Voting Rights Act, which barred obstacles such as literacy tests that were set up by segregationists to keep blacks from registering to vote.

Certain provisions of the Voting Rights Act, such as the use of federal examiners and a requirement for Justice Department approval of election law changes, will be up for renewal by Congress in 2007.

"I bring a message to all elected officials," said Keif Schleifer, 43, of Atlanta, who walked the entire 54-mile trek with about 50 other people this past week.

"We've marched from Selma to Montgomery to exercise our patriotic right. We are watching your every action. We are holding you accountable. We are not going away."

Annual Gridiron dinner features a comedy of errors by GOP, Dems

BY DARLENE SUPERVILLE

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush poked fun at himself at the press corps Saturday night and offered a new reason for overhauling the Social Security system.

Raising the name of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Bush said, "We have to fix it or Rumsfeld may never retire."

Bush noted — with a little help — the presence of a number of new Cabinet members attending the Gridiron Club's 120th annual dinner.

Turning to Vice President Dick Cheney, the president said, "Dick, maybe you can point them out to me."

Some of the press skirts he had watched earlier in a long evening were done so steroid use in professional sports, but Bush said that in looking out at the press corps he was confident none of them were on steroids.

"These are all natural bodies," he said.

Bush said anyone looking for a transcript of the evening's pro-

gram should call Doug Wead, the longtime Bush family friend who recently made public tape recordings of private telephone conversations he had with Bush before he started running for president.

The president noted that former President Clinton was recovering from surgery and said that "when he woke up he was surrounded by his loved ones" — his wife, daughter and "my dad."

The former President Bush and Clinton have become something of an item despite their once fierce political rivalry.

Earlier in the evening, a woman pretending to be John Kerry's wife sang about how happy she is that he wasn't elected.

It was as close to "Saturday Night Live" as Washington gets, as journalists assumed the personas of politicians in song, dance and wisecracks.

The Gridiron Dinner is a journalistic tradition in which, for one night, members of the Fourth Estate turn the tables on the powerful people they report and write about daily. The Gridiron Club's motto is to "sing, but never burn."



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Net effort aims to keep Schiavo alive

By MAYA BELL

The Orlando (Fla.) Sentinel

ORLANDO, Fla. — Fifteen years ago, two leaders of the

anti-abortion group Operation Rescue walked into a motel in small-town Missouri and begged the night clerk for a fax machine.

At a nearby hospital, the parents of Nancy Cruzan were set to remove the feeding tube that had kept their daughter alive for nearly eight years. The activists were desperate to mobilize opposition to what they considered would be their murder.

"That's how sophisticated we were," remembers the Rev. Pat Mahoney, now executive director of the Christian Defense Coalition.

"We were desperately trying to get the word out, desperately trying to get people out. There just wasn't much interest."

Today, Mahoney is a leader of an informal but growing network of conservative, religious and disability organizations who, with the click of a computer mouse, are enlisting hundreds of thousands of people in Bob and Mary Schindler's fight to keep their daughter Terri Schiavo alive.

The feeding tube that has pumped life-sustaining nutrients into the severely brain-damaged Florida woman's stomach for 15 years is scheduled to be disconnected Friday under a court order won by her husband, Michael.

The courts have agreed with Michael Schiavo that his wife is in a persistent vegetative state, and although she never wrote down her wishes made it clear in casual conversations that she would have rejected artificial life support.



Bob and Mary Schindler, parents of Terri Schiavo, listen to supporters at a rally in Pinellas Park, Fla., on Saturday. With words of encouragement from actor Mel Gibson, the family of Terri Schiavo joined a rally Saturday to continue pleading for the brain-damaged woman's life, just days before the court-ordered removal of her feeding tube.

But turning to the Internet, alternative media and grass-roots organizations to spread their right-to-life messages, what Mahoney calls the "faith-and-values community" has unleashed an avalanche of support for Schiavo's parents.

That has prompted lawmakers in Congress and Tallahassee to file legislation on the Schindlers' behalf and ignited a national debate on the withdrawal of medically supplied hydration and nutrition, drawing the likes of the Vatican, and on Saturday, actor Mel Gibson to their cause.

The first goal of the campaign, Mahoney said, is to save Terri

4-year-old shoots 2-year-old brother

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — A 2-year-old was shot by his 4-year-old brother, who may not have known the difference between a real gun and a toy gun, police said.

The 2-year-old, who suffered a single gunshot wound to the temple, was in critical condition Saturday night at Ben Taub Hospital.

The shooting occurred Saturday afternoon at a home in southwest Houston.

Police Sgt. Cameron Grysen said the boys had been arguing when the 2-year-old threw a toy at his brother.

The mother thought the boys had returned to their room, but they had instead gone to her room, where the older boy took a loaded gun from the woman's purse.

"The 4-year-old was angry ... he went and got the gun, put it to his brother's head and shot the gun," Grysen said.

The mother told police she had the .32-caliber automatic to protect her family because of recent neighborhood burglaries, and that Saturday was the one day that she did not secure the weapon.

She could face criminal charges.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs	\$1,3768
Dollar buys	€0.7283
British pound	£0.68
Japanese yen (March 12)	¥102.00
Commercial rates	
British pound	\$1.5222
Canadian dollar	C\$1.2642
Denmark (Krone)	5.53
Egypt (Pound)	£1,3469/0.743
France (Euro)	€0.7965
Hong Kong (Dollar)	HK\$1.00
Hungary (Forint)	160.33
India (Rupee)	₹60.66
Israel (Shekel)	₪4.2935
Japan (Yen)	¥103.68
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2915
Malaysia (Ringgit)	RM0.27
Philippines (Peso)	₱46.00
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	₹2.47
Singapore (Dollar)	S\$1.315
South Korea (Won)	₩1,080.30
Switzerland (Franc)	1.468
Thailand (Baht)	฿30.25
Turkey (New Lira)	₺1,4045

PRECIOUS METALS

New York Merc close	
Gold	\$446.20
Silver	\$7.535

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.50
Federal funds rate	3.50
Discount market rate	3.25
90-day bill	3.25
30-year bond	4.62

Sources: The Associated Press, Bank of

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Cents and Sensibility Money tip of the day

Prepaid credit for teens

MarketWatch

NEW YORK — Teenagers spent an estimated \$175 billion last year, according to Teenage Research Unlimited, a market research company specializing in young adults.

Now credit card companies are rushing to capture that audience with prepaid cards, featuring celebrities such as rapper Usher and actress Hilary Duff, as well as cartoon characters like Hello Kitty.

Parents register their child for a card and then load it up with money. Some parents use the cards to give their kids funds for events such as back-to-school shopping, while others use it to dole out weekly allowances. They also can monitor their children's spending habits via the Internet.

Though touted as a great way for teens and preteens to learn how to manage money, this is one "money tool" you should steer clear of, advised Janet

Bodnar, executive officer of Kiplinger's Personal Finance. Kids aren't using such cards to learn about credit or money management, she said: "They want it because it's cool."

"It's not their money," Bodnar added, noting that many teenagers don't understand how credit works. "It's still mom and dad's money."

These prepaid debits also carry hefty charges. Not only will you pay for a card setup fee (anywhere from \$20 to \$50 per card), but you'll also pay monthly maintenance charges (about \$5). And many cards charge \$3 to \$5 each time you reload the accounts with money. Those fees add up quickly if you plan to use such a card for your child's allowance.

Stick to cash until your teenager has his or her own job, Bodnar recommends. Then let him or her open a checking account with a real debit card.

Ugh, gross! Disgusting exhibit proves popular

BY JOSEPH B. FRAZIER

The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Freddie the Fly lays it in terms dear to the adolescent heart: "My wife's cooking is so bad I vomit before I eat. But seriously..."

Freddie tosses off one-liners like the late Henry Youngman, all of them true. It's all about "gross" at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry.

Freddie, a huge animated model, is the star of the "Vomit Slurpers" exhibit in "Grossology: The Science of Creatures Gross and Disgusting." Freddie has grade-schoolers clustered around as he explains how he upchucks his digestive juices on a sandwich then sucks up his dinner. "Hey, soup and a sandwich..."

The display and more like it turn the gross into a teaching tool, often with indelicate candor. It's on a North American tour that winds up at Space Center Houston in June 2007.

"REETCH! Kitty hurls a warm hairy hot dog!" reads a display on feline hair balls that also gives a clear diagram of what makes Fluffy tick.

At the Dung-Ball Rally, a much-larger-than-life dung beetle (the Egyptians called them scarabs) boasts, "I can push a ball of poop 50 times my weight uphill." A video game challenges young poopsters to see whose beetle can get his dung ball to the top first.

But there's a message here.

A fly, the exhibit notes, can carry 1 billion bacteria and any of 100 diseases; the dung bee-

tle is imported to Texas pastures and one can bury 1,000 pounds of cow droppings a year.

Exhibit visitors also learn that doctors were called "leeches" in Old English because they used leeches to suck the blood of patients they were treating. The practice is not totally dead.

The classrooms of kids who file through could watch it spelled out on the blackboard back at school. But this way, museum officials hope, they will remember.

"It's a safe space for kids," said Cara Wolf-Feather, an educator at the museum. "They can say things they can't say at home. And they may be grossed-out, but they may be lured in deeper to find out more."

Animal Grossology follows a popular exhibit of "Grossology: The (Impolite) Science of the Human Body" that toured nationally and broke many attendance records.

The human grossology display at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, which bills it as "Know Thy Poop," drew 400,000 visitors in three months, more than double any other springtime show it has hosted.

Grossology concept comes from Sylvia Branzel, a former science teacher from Port Roberts, Wash., whose five books on human and animal grossology have sold in the hundreds of thousands.

Branzel said the target age is 8 to 12 but the exhibits try to accommodate everyone.

She said the idea came in 1993 when she was clipping her toenails. "It literally hit me: 'What's



Susan Almqvist, left, of Vancouver, Wash., and her children, Katie, 7, and Benjamin, 9, check out the display of a vomiting fly on top of a giant chocolate chip cookie at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry in Portland, Ore. The display is part of "Grossology: The Science of Creatures Gross and Disgusting," the brainchild of a former science teacher designed to turn the gross into a teaching tool, which is on a North American tour winding up at the Space Center in Houston in June 2007.

that gunk made of? Kids like gross stuff. I wanted to teach them science. It was born right then and there."

However, Branzel, who stepped out of classroom teaching a couple of years ago, said she has

avoided the grotesque.

"I stay in areas that most people experience themselves. For example, I stay away from elephantiasis. It's not what most people experience. We make fun of all of ourselves, not just certain

examples."

And parents seem to like the show. "They'll tell me, 'Oh my gosh, my child loves science a lot!'"

She said an educational TV series may be in the offing.

Texas OKs cupcakes in classrooms

The Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Amid a tense education funding debate, Texas House members passed Wednesday to take up a matter dear to school kids everywhere: cupcakes.

Legislators in a unanimous recorded vote cleared the way for public school students to bring the sweet treats — complete with candy sprinkles — to celebrate their birthdays.

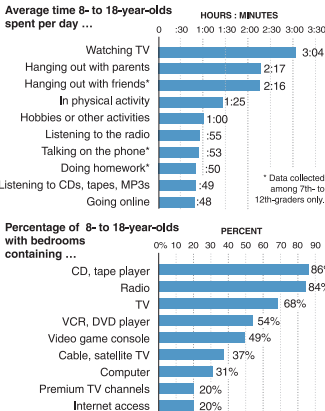
"We have an opportunity to really make the children happy here," said Rep. Jim Durnan, a Waco Democrat, asking fellow House members to approve the measure requested by his school-age daughter, Lauren.

Texas Agriculture Commissioner Susan Combs, whose agency oversees the state's school lunch program, imposed new healthy food rules aimed at limiting or eliminating junk food and food that competes with cafeteria fare.

In August, soon after setting the new rules, Combs issued a "cupcake clarification" stating that cakes and cupcakes could be brought to school for birthdays. The agriculture department did, however, recommend that birthday parties be scheduled after the last lunch period.

Study finds media-saturated youth

A new study has found young people ages 8 to 18 have an unprecedented amount of media in their daily lives and surroundings, spending up to six-and-a-half hours a day in media-related activities.



SOURCE: Kaiser Family Foundation

Kids' rooms loaded with new technology

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It wasn't too long ago that a kid with a stereo and television in his room might have been the coolest on the block. Now, that just makes him one of the crowd.

In the past five years, many children's rooms have evolved into multimedia centers, with cable or satellite hookups, computers and video game consoles.

For instance, 20 percent of youngsters age 8 to 18 can surf the Web from their bedrooms, double the figure from 1999, according to a Kaiser Family Foundation survey released Wednesday.

"That has helped turn kids into 'media multitaskers,' researchers suggest. Nearly one-third of kids say they chat on the phone, surf the Web, instant message, watch TV or listen to music 'most of the time' while doing their homework. What effect this behavior has on the often fragile ability of kids to focus is unclear because detailed research is fairly new, said Vicki Rideout, the foundation vice president who directed the study.

Some of the blame — or praise — rests with the Internet and technology such as instant messaging, tools widely used for education and entertainment, said Lee Rain-

ie, director of the Pew Internet & American Life Project.

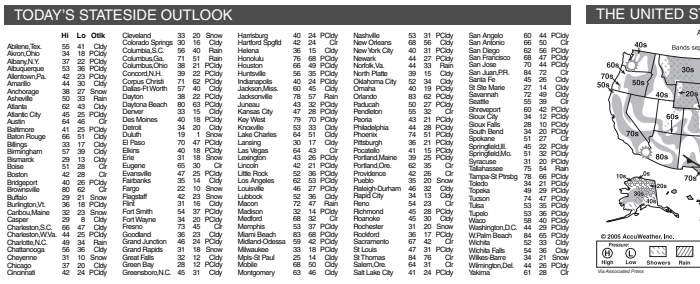
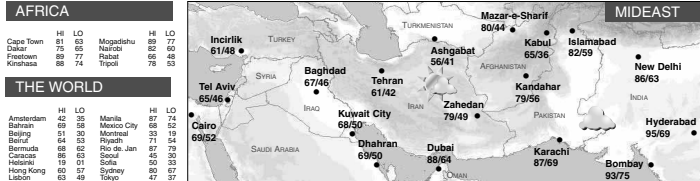
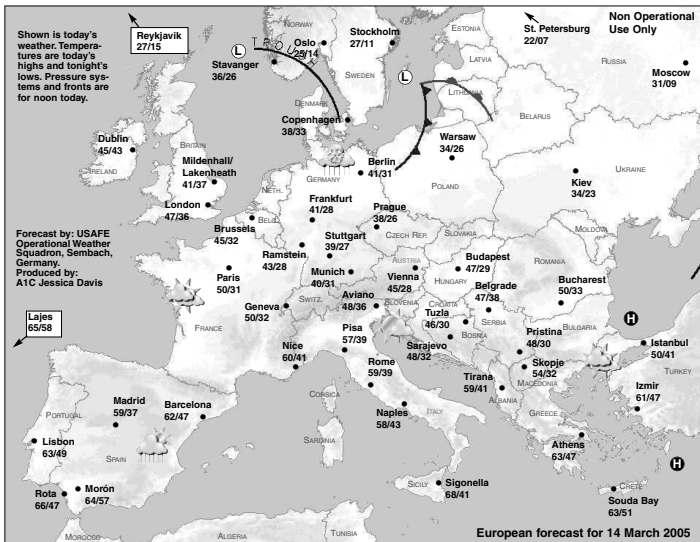
Kaiser surveyed more than 2,000 third-graders through 12th-graders between October 2003 and March 2004 about their nonschool use of TV and videos, music, video games, computers, movies and print. The study included nearly 700 people who kept seven-day "media diaries."

On average, kids devoted six hours and 21 minutes a day to recreational media use, an increase of just two minutes from 1999, the Kaiser study found.

That still amounts to over 44 hours a week — four more hours than a parent's typical work week.

But 26 percent of kids in 2004 said they "multitasked" when using any form of media, compared with 16 percent five years earlier. Over the same period the proportion of kids' homes that have two or more computers jumped from 25 percent to 39 percent, and the proportion with Internet access in the home grew from 47 percent to 74 percent.

The proportion of kids who had a VCR or DVD player in their room rose from 36 percent to 54 percent, while the proportion with cable or satellite TV in their own room grew from 29 percent to 37 percent.



EUROPEAN FORECAST

Benelex: Mostly cloudy with isolated rain and snow showers. Highs in the 40s. Tuesday lows in the 30s.

Britain, Ireland: Cloudy with isolated rain showers. Highs in the 40s. Tuesday lows in the mid-30s to mid-40s.

Croatia and Bosnia: Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid-40s to lower 50s. Tuesday lows in the 30s.

France: Partly to mostly cloudy. Highs in the lower 50s to lower 60s. Tuesday lows in the lower 30s to lower 40s.

Northern Germany: Mostly cloudy with rain and snow showers. Highs in the 40s. Tuesday lows in the upper 20s to lower 30s.

Southern Germany: Mostly cloudy with isolated rain and snow showers. Highs in the upper 30s to lower 40s. Tuesday lows in the upper 20s to lower 30s.

Hungary: Partly cloudy. Highs in the 40s. Tuesday lows in the upper 20s.

Northern Italy: Mostly cloudy. Highs in the upper 40s to upper 50s. Tuesday lows in the mid-30s to lower 40s.

Southern Italy: Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 50s to upper 60s. Tuesday lows in the 40s.

Kosovo: Partly cloudy. Highs in the 40s. Tuesday lows in the lower 30s.

Norway: Cloudy with rain and snow showers. Highs in the mid-20s to mid-30s. Tuesday lows in the mid-20s to mid-30s.

Portugal, Spain: Partly cloudy becoming cloudy with rain showers. Highs in the mid-50s to mid-60s. Tuesday lows in the mid-40s to mid-50s along the coast and in the 30s inland.

Turkey: Mostly cloudy with isolated rain showers. Highs in the lower 50s to lower 60s. Tuesday lows in the 40s.

For current weather watches, warnings, and 5-day forecasts go to the USAF Operational Weather Squadron home page at: <http://www.sembach.af.mil> <http://www.public.sembach.af.mil>

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Fit on a flight

AK ANCHORAGE — A man denied alcohol during a United Airlines flight went on a rampage, breaking tray tables and other equipment, the FBI said.

Brian A. Casias, 35, has been charged with interfering with the flight crew on Flight 711 from Denver to Anchorage.

Casias of Commerce City, Colo., was heard swearing as he boarded the flight Tuesday, and the plane's captain advised him that he would not be served alcoholic beverages. When a flight attendant denied Casias' request for a drink, he allegedly threw his tray of food down and spat repeatedly on the floor, the FBI said.

Casias allegedly ripped the back of the seat and broke two tray tables, throwing them to the floor, the FBI said.

Casias also is accused of urinating on the floor of the lavatory, where he allegedly broke a hand-capped bar and a changing table. He also is accused of swearing repeatedly and of smoking several cigarettes on the plane.

Rapists drunk at center

FL ARCADIA — Violent sexual predators at a privately operated treatment center brew their own alcohol, wander around "staggering drunk" and often have brutal fights, state investigators found.

A report by the Department of Children & Families' inspector general portrays the Florida Civil Commitment Center as a largely lawless place where rapists and child molesters freely consume alcohol and brawl.

"All residents and staff interviewed admitted 'everyone' knows the residents make and consume homemade alcohol, called 'buck,'" the report completed last month said. "Two residents during the investigative interview admitted being intoxicated at the time."

Foreign pledge protest

MD MILLERSVILLE — A ninth-grader is protesting his school's decision to broadcast the Pledge of Allegiance in foreign languages as part of National Foreign Language Week.

Patrick Linton said he and other students at Old Mill High School sat down rather than stand when the Pledge was read over the school's public address system in Russian. Linton's teacher told him if he had a problem he should leave the room.

He did, and did not plan to return this week.

"This is America, and we got soldiers at war," the 15-year-old said. "When you're saying the Pledge in a different language which nobody understands, that's not OK."

Tour boats seized

HI HONOLULU — Two tour boats owned by Dream Cruises were seized by the U.S. Marshals Service because the company was in default of a \$1.4 million mortgage on the vessels, according to officials and court documents.

The American Dream in Kewalo

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Basin and its sister ship the Kona Dream in Kona won't be allowed to operate until court proceedings are completed, a spokesman for the service said.

Deputy marshals posted "No Trespassing" signs aboard the vessels while employees were allowed to remove personal belongings. About 75 employees are affected.

Dream Cruises President Michael Watson said he was surprised by the action. He acknowledged being a couple of months late on payments, but he said he was in discussions with the lender for a new payment plan.

Teachers dropping out

RI PROVIDENCE — Nineteen members of the faculty at troubled Hope High School have told administrators they intend to transfer to other schools, according to Hope administrators and state education officials.

Another 55 faculty told a screening committee they intend to stay at the school, which had faced a state takeover but will undergo widespread changes instead.

Some of the teachers who indicated they'll transfer told interviewers they had tired of past reform efforts, according to Frances Gallo, chief of administration. Many cited poor attendance, transportation problems, lack of disci-

pline and scheduling difficulties.

Girl stranded

TX DALLAS — A school bus driver accused of forcing a 5-year-old girl to get off the bus more than a mile from her scheduled stop was placed on paid administrative leave pending an investigation.

Jadian Anderson said the driver made her daughter, Syria, get off the bus after she complained that another student was hitting her.

"He did not leave her with another adult; he left her on the street," Anderson said. "He was very negligent, and he endangered my child."

Syria walked about a half-mile before a crossing guard saw her and noticed she was crying. While the guard was trying to figure out where she lived, a relative drove by, saw the girl and picked her up.

Dallas County Schools spokeswoman Deanne Hultender said that if the driver acted inappropriately, officials will "take the proper action."

Dorm shower cam

CT HAMDEN — A Quinnipiac University student has been sanctioned for allegedly hiding a video camera in a dormitory shower.

University officials refused to name the student and would not say what the sanctions were.

The student was sanctioned after a story about the hidden camera appeared in the student newspaper, the Chronicle.

Doug Manners, a sophomore journalism major from East Longmeadow, Mass., reportedly discovered the camera.

Manners noticed something with red lights attached to a shower grate in the Troup residence hall on Feb. 6, the Chronicle reported. He and his roommate took the grate out of the ceiling and found the camera, which was connected to an adapter and electrical cord.

The two students brought the camera to the dorm's residential assistant, who called campus security. Officers confiscated the equipment and inspected other bathrooms in the dorm.

DMV files stolen

NV NORTH LAS VEGAS — Personal information from more than 8,900 people was stolen when thieves broke into a Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles office, officials said Friday.

A computer taken during the break-in contained names, ages, dates of birth, Social Security numbers, photographs and signatures of southern Nevada residents who obtained driver's licenses between Nov. 25 and March 4 at the North Las Vegas office, state DMV chief Ginny Lewis said.

The DMV had previously maintained that the information on the computer stolen in Monday's break-in was encrypted, making it virtually useless to thieves.

But Lewis said Friday that Digital Corp., the Beaverton, Ore.-based company that provides digital driver's licenses in Nevada, told her Thursday the information was not encrypted, and was readily accessible.



Watch out, coming through Kate Pfeiffer tunnels her way out onto the street at the home of her grandmother, Valerie Pfeiffer, in Augusta, Maine.



Husband on the run Saad Mian runs from his wife, Sara, as she attempts to wallop him with a snowball during a family picnic at Menominee Park in Oshkosh, Wis.



Getting the job done

Edward Oliver, who works for the Anderson Parks and Recreation Department, paints a trash can green at the Darwin H. Wright Municipal Park in Anderson, S.C.



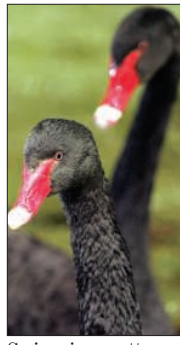
Winter fun Taking advantage of one of the last days of their winter vacation, Kristin Korona, top, and Danielle LaMontagne, both of Londonderry, N.H., test out the sledding hill at Roby Park in Nashua, N.H.



Enjoying the view Dick Droghei catches some air with his stunt kite at O.K. Ward Park in Chubbuck, Idaho.



Bringing down the house A bulldozer pushes together the remains of what used to be a two-room school in Ellis, Neb. Russ' Excavating of Beatrice knocked the building down after satisfying asbestos concerns raised by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, and the rubble will be burned and buried at a later date.



Swimming pretty A pair of black swans swim in an exhibit at the 134th annual New England Spring Flower Show, at the Bay Side Expo Center in Boston.



Peaceful sunset As the setting sun paints the sky, a cow and two calves walk high on a ridge near Belt, Mont.

Anti-Bush road rage

FL TAMPA — A man apparently enraged by a Bush-Cheney sticker on a woman's sport utility vehicle chased her for miles and tried to run her off the road while holding up an anti-Bush sign, police said.

"He told our officers that he just got mad at her, so he went after her," said police spokesman Joe Durkin.

Nathan Alan Winkler, 31, was freed on \$2,000 bail on a charge of aggravated stalking, which carries up to five years in prison.

No one answered the telephone Thursday at Winkler's home, but his father, John Winkler, said: "I know that he's very anti-Bush. But I don't see him doing anything like that. He's the least aggressive person I know."

Fernandez was taking her 10-year-old son and 3-year-old daughter to a ball field when the incident occurred.

Raise your right paw

AR BENTONVILLE — Prosecutors hoping for a witness in a murder case to roll over were barking up the wrong tree.

They sent out a batch of subpoenas for anyone who had contact with Albert K. Smith while he was jailed awaiting his murder trial.

One of those subpoenas went out to 5-year-old Murphy Smith — Smith's dog, it turned out.

The defendant had written his dog a letter from his cell, and that is how the shish tzu's name got on the witness list.

Prosecutors realized the mistake after the defendant's brother brought in Murphy to answer the subpoena and a deputy would not let them into the courthouse because no dogs were allowed.

Albert Smith is accused of shooting to death his ex-wife's boyfriend.

Twins neglected

NY LAKE CARMEL — A set of malnourished 7-year-old twins whose existence was a surprise to neighbors and school officials were found in a dirty, unkempt home in Putnam County, police said.

The twins, Cassidy and John Giordano, who weighed 41 and 30 pounds respectively, were being treated for malnourishment and isolation at Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla.

Their parents, Eda and James Giordano of Lake Carmel, were each charged with two counts of endangering a child and were released without bail. Their phone is unlisted and Town Court records did not show an attorney of record.

Chief Donald Smith of the Town of Kent police force, which covers Lake Carmel, said it had probably been several years since the children had left the house.

Drug blamed in murder

CO DENVER — Nobody disputes that Danny Pommerville beat his 64-year-old grandmother to death with wine bottles last August, leaving her to die in a pool of blood and fleeing the state in her car.

But a defense attorney for the 24-year-old man told jurors that her client was in a PCP-induced

rage.

"He snapped. He flipped. The PCP kicked in," Deputy Public Defender Cynthia Mares said. "His grandmother was telling him that he was a loser and that he should be in prison the rest of his life, and he snapped. He doesn't remember most of what happened."

Pommerville is on trial on charges of first-degree murder in the death of his grandmother, Jane Mazza.

Animal abuse sentence

CA RIVERSIDE, Calif. — The co-defendant of a former animal rescuer, who pleaded guilty in January to child-endangerment and multiple animal-cruelty charges, has been sentenced to 180 days in custody and four years' probation.

Marla Jean Smith was ordered to start serving her sentence on weekends beginning April 1. Smith helped former partner John Weinhardt operate the defunct Tiger Rescue sanctuary. State officials testified during Weinhardt's trial that they found one of the couples' children living in a home filled with trash and animal feces.

Officials also found malnourished tiger and leopard cubs in an attic, two alligators in a bathtub, two juvenile tigers in a patio and powerful animal tranquilizers, including PCP, in an unlocked refrigerator.

Street taxi getaway

UT OGDEN — Police said it seemed more like a movie plot than real life when a taxi driver became the reluctant wheel in for a suspected bank robber's getaway attempt.

The hunt for Donald Archambault, 53, who was suspected of robbing a Salt Lake City bank, ended 30 miles north of Ogden. Archambault bailed out of the cab and was arrested by waiting police.

Cabbie Ali Ahmed didn't realize his customer was wanted until he got a call on his cell phone from a police detective.

Ahmed's fears escalated when the suspect allegedly told him "he would empty his gun" if Ahmed turned him in to police. The suspect didn't know that Ahmed was talking to a detective throughout much of the Interstate 15 ride.

Gangsters get life

DC WASHINGTON — Six members of a drug gang dubbed "Murder Inc." blamed for dozens of killings in the nation's capital were sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

The group's leaders, Kevin L. Gray, 33, and Rodney L. Moore, 39, were convicted last year after an eight-month trial. Gray was sentenced Wednesday to 26 concurrent life terms, plus 285 years. Moore received 14 concurrent life sentences, plus 135 years.

Four men who were convicted last May also were sentenced to multiple life terms.

The Murder Inc. gang is believed responsible for at least 31 killings between 1982 and 1999 as part of a quest to dominate the District of Columbia's cocaine and heroin markets, the U.S. attorney's office said.

Stories and photos from wire services

AFRTS Television Schedule

Updated sports listings are available on the first Scoreboard page in the sports section or AFN's Web site at <http://myafn.dodmedia.osd.mil/>

MONDAY, MARCH 14, 2005										
	(AFN-FAMILY)	(AFN-MOVIE)	(AFN-EUROPE)	(AFN-KOREA)	(AFN-NEWS)	(AFN-SPORTS)	(SPECTRUM)	(AFN-PACIFIC)		
9:00	Stanley	Movie "No Greater Love" (1996, Drama) Keith Hurbertson, Drew Searns	Dr. Phil	Jeopardy!	The Bellway Boys	Armed Football Regional Coverage - Arizona Rattlers at Tampa Bay Storm or Chicago Rush at Grand Rapids Rampage (Taped)	30-Minute Meals	Jeopardy!		
9:30	Sages-Sameas Cat			Headline News	For News Watch		Paula's Home Cooking	Headline News		
10:00	Arthur (1997, Comedy) (E)			ESPN News	Bulls and Bears		Designing Chalkboard	ESPN News		
10:30	Reading Rainbow (E)			Advisory Clock	Carroll on Business		Fashion Emergency	Pacific Report		
11:00	Sages-Sameas Cat			(35) Guiding Light	60 Minutes		The Soup	60 Minutes		
11:30	Stanley			(17) General Hospital	Forbes		The King of Queens			
12:00	Dora the Explorer			Headline News	Without a Trace "Wannabe"		That '70s Show "Drive-In"	Without a Trace "Wannabe"		
12:30	The Wiggles			Judge Judy	Detective NBC		Girlfriends "Just Desserts"			
13:00	Bob the Builder	Movie "The Hot Chick" (1998) Maurice Chevalier, Leslie Caron & young Parisienne is a groomed & beautiful courtesan.	Today Kelly Clarkson; Allison Dubois.	Without a Trace "Wannabe"	American Morning		Charm'd Page accidentally switches bodies with Phoebe.	ER Dr. Carter slips into a dangerous and lonely depression.		
13:30	Dragon Tales (E)			ChalkZone (E)	Pacific Report		Strong Medicine	Pacific Report		
14:00	Blue's Clues "Thankful"			Mucha Lucha	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno		Any Day Now "Three Lucky Ladies in the Line"	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno		
14:30	Barney & Friends (E)			ChalkZone (E)			Third Watch "He Said/She Said"	The Late Show With David Letterman		
15:00	Funniest Home Videos			Headline News	FOX News		NBA Fastbreak	The Late Show With David Letterman		
15:30	Growing Pains			ChalkZone (E)	FOX News		Law & Order "Judge Jured"	Dennis Miller		
16:00	Pokemon			Mucha Lucha	FOX News		The Simpsons	Everybody Loves Raymond		
16:30	Yu-Gi-Oh			ChalkZone (E)	FOX News		NBA Fastbreak	The Dead Zone "Instinct" John investigates animal behavior		
17:00	Doug "Doug's Bull Seal"			ChalkZone (E)	FOX News		NBA Fastbreak	Headline News		
17:30	The Wild Thornberrys			ChalkZone (E)	FOX News		NBA Fastbreak	Entertainment Studios.com		
18:00	The Fairly OddParents			ChalkZone (E)	FOX News		NBA Fastbreak	The Hot List		
18:30	Rugrats "Graham Canyon"			ChalkZone (E)	FOX News		NBA Fastbreak	Good Morning America		
19:00	Lizzie McGuire			ChalkZone (E)	FOX News		NBA Fastbreak	Good Morning America		
19:30	The Brothers Garcia			ChalkZone (E)	FOX News		NBA Fastbreak	Good Morning America		
20:00	Smallville "Nightmare" A woman claims to be Clark's mother.			ChalkZone (E)	FOX News		NBA Fastbreak	Good Morning America		
20:30				ChalkZone (E)	FOX News		NBA Fastbreak	Good Morning America		
21:00	Boy Meets World			ChalkZone (E)	FOX News		NBA Fastbreak	Good Morning America		
21:30	Boy Meets World			ChalkZone (E)	FOX News		NBA Fastbreak	Good Morning America		
22:00	The Cozy Show			ChalkZone (E)	FOX News		NBA Fastbreak	Good Morning America		
22:30	Home Improvement			ChalkZone (E)	FOX News		NBA Fastbreak	Good Morning America		
23:00	Touched by an Angel "Sinner's Home"			ChalkZone (E)	FOX News		NBA Fastbreak	Good Morning America		
23:30				ChalkZone (E)	FOX News		NBA Fastbreak	Good Morning America		

TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 2005										
	(AFN-FAMILY)	(AFN-MOVIE)	(AFN-EUROPE)	(AFN-KOREA)	(AFN-NEWS)	(AFN-SPORTS)	(SPECTRUM)	(AFN-PACIFIC)		
00:00	Doug (E)			Late Show-Letterman	Late Show With Me Seams	SportsCenter	Late Night with Conan O'Brien	Late Show With Me Seams		
00:30	The Wild Thornberrys			Headline News	Access Hollywood	Headline News	Paula's Home Cooking	Paula's Home Cooking		
1:00	The Fairly OddParents			NBA Basketball Los Angeles Lakers at Washington Wizards. From MO Center in Washington, D.C. (Live)	Connie the Cow	NCAA Women's Selection College GameNight	The Dead Zone "Instinct" John investigates animal behavior	Connie the Cow		
1:30	Rugrats			What of Fortune	Dr. Phil		Headline News	What of Fortune		
2:00	Lizzie McGuire			Oprah Winfrey	Hannity & Colmes	College Basketball NBA Tournament First Round - Teams TBA. (Live)	Monster House "Hollywood House"	Oprah Winfrey		
2:30	The Brothers Garcia			Motorcycle Racing Speedway (Live From, From, From)	NBC Nightly News	The Fox Report With Shepard Smith	Friends	NBC Nightly News		
3:00	Smallville "Nightmare" A woman claims to be Clark's mother.			ABC World News Tonight	Judge Judy	Low Dobbs Tonight	Jeopardy!	Jeopardy!		
3:30	Boy Meets World			ESPN News	Without a Trace "Wannabe"	SportsCenter	Swampthology	Access Hollywood		
4:00	Sesame Street (E)			(35) Guiding Light	Headline News		Caribbean Workout	(23) Guiding Light		
4:30	Barney & Friends (E)			CBS Evening News	(13) General Hospital	Larry King Live	Body Shaping	(13) General Hospital		
5:00	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)			NBC Nightly News	NBC Nightly News	High School Basketball Football game First From Cleveland. (Taped)	TYPICAL Mary Ellen	The View		
5:30	Dragon Tales (E)			Late Show With Me Seams	Larry King Live		The View	Spy		
6:00	Bob the Builder			Access Hollywood	Headline News	BET Nightly News	Animalia	Animalia		
6:30	The Wiggles "The Party"			Connie the Cow	All Grown Up	Teen Kids News (E)	All Grown Up	Teen Kids News (E)		
7:00	Dora the Explorer			What of Fortune	Dr. Phil	Hardball	Jeopardy!	Jeopardy!		
7:30	Stanley			Headline News	Headline News	Tennis Pacific U.S. Open - Day 2 From Indian Wells, Calif. (Taped)	30-Minute Meals	30-Minute Meals		
8:00	Sages-Sameas Cat			(38) Guiding Light	Advisory Clock	The O'Reilly Factor	Sweet Dreams	Sweet Dreams		
8:30	Arthur "What Is That Thing?"			Smallville "Covenant"	Nightline		Best for Less	ESPN News		
9:00	Reading Rainbow (E)			(17) General Hospital	Headline News	Fox and Friends First	Stripped	Pacific Report		
9:30	Sages-Sameas Cat			Headline News	Movie "The Hours" (2002, Drama) Mary Streep. Three women in different eras suffer emotional crisis.	American Morning	E News	Smallville "Covenant"		
10:00	Sages-Sameas Cat			(35) Guiding Light	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	SportsCenter	That '70s Show	Movie "The Hours" (2002, Drama) Mary Streep. Three women in different eras suffer emotional crisis.		
10:30	Stanley			Headline News	Headline News		Charm'd "Into the Woods"	Pacific Report		
11:00	Dora the Explorer			Judge Judy	Headline News		Girlfriends "See Mates"	Headline News		
11:30	The Wiggles			Today Hosts	Dennis Miller		Strong Medicine	Pacific Report		
12:00	Bob the Builder			Headline News	Countdown With Keith Olbermann		Everybody Loves Raymond	Countdown With Keith Olbermann		
12:30	Dragon Tales (E)			Access Hollywood	Headline News	DaySide With Linda Wester	Star Trek: Enterprise "The Forge"	Access Hollywood		
13:00	Barney & Friends (E)			Headline News	Headline News	FOX News	CSC Miami "Ashes to Ashes"	Headline News		
13:30	Funniest Home Videos			Headline News	Headline News	FOX News	Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim at Chicago White Sox. From Tyson Electric Park in Tucson, Ariz. (Live)	Headline News		
14:00	Growing Pains "Slice of Life"			Headline News	Headline News	FOX News	Friends	Headline News		
14:30	Pokemon "New Masters"			Headline News	Headline News	FOX News	Mark Twain (Part 4 of 4)	Headline News		
15:00	Doug (E)			Headline News	Headline News	FOX News	Good Morning America	Good Morning America		
15:30	The Wild Thornberrys			Headline News	Headline News	FOX News	Good Morning America	Good Morning America		
16:00	The Fairly OddParents			Headline News	Headline News	FOX News	Good Morning America	Good Morning America		
16:30	Rugrats			Headline News	Headline News	FOX News	Good Morning America	Good Morning America		
17:00	The Amadeus Show			Headline News	Headline News	FOX News	Good Morning America	Good Morning America		
18:00	Everwood "Daddy's Little Girl"			Headline News	Headline News	FOX News	Good Morning America	Good Morning America		
19:00	Sister, Sister			Headline News	Headline News	FOX News	Good Morning America	Good Morning America		
20:00	The Cozy Show			Headline News	Headline News	FOX News	Good Morning America	Good Morning America		
21:00	Home Improvement			Headline News	Headline News	FOX News	Good Morning America	Good Morning America		
22:00	Touched by an Angel "Sinner's Home"			Headline News	Headline News	FOX News	Good Morning America	Good Morning America		
23:00				Headline News	Headline News	FOX News	Good Morning America	Good Morning America		

TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 2005

AFN-FAMILY	AFN-VIDEO	AFN-EUROPE	AFN-KOREA	AFN-NEWS	AFN-SPORTS	(SPECTRUM)	AFN-PACIFIC
00:00 Doug (E)							
00:30 The Wild Thornberrys							
1:00 The Fairly OddParents							
1:30 Rugrats							
2:00 Lizzie McGuire							
2:30 The Brothers Garcia							
3:00 Smallville "Nightmare" A woman claims to be Clark's mother.							
3:30 Boy Meets World							
4:00 Boy Meets World							
4:30 Boy Meets World							
5:00 Sesame Street (E)							
5:30 Barney & Friends (E)							
6:00 Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)							
6:30 Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)							
7:00 Dragon Tales (E)							
7:30 Bob the Builder							
8:00 The Wiggles "The Party"							
8:30 Dora the Explorer							
9:00 Stanley "Woodstock Woes"							
9:30 Sages-Sameas Cat							
10:00 Arthur "What Is That Thing?"							
10:30 Reading Rainbow (E)							
11:00 Sages-Sameas Cat							
11:30 Stanley							
12:00 Dora the Explorer							
12:30 The Wiggles							
13:00 Bob the Builder							
13:30 Dragon Tales (E)							
14:00 Blue's Clues							
14:30 Barney & Friends (E)							
15:00 Funniest Home Videos							
15:30 Growing Pains "Side of Life"							
16:00 Pokemon "Name's Manuever"							
16:30 Yu-Gi-Oh (Part 1 of 2)							
17:00 Doug (E)							
17:30 The Wild Thornberrys							
18:00 The Fairly OddParents							
18:30 Rugrats							
19:00 The Proud Family (E)							
19:30 The Arnold Family (E)							
20:00 Everwood "Daddy's Little Girl"							
20:30							
21:00 Sister, Sister							
21:30 Sister, Sister							
22:00 The Cozy Show							
22:30 Home Improvement							
23:00 Touched by an Angel "Mister's Bad Day"							
23:30							

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FACES

From 'Sideways' to parting ways

Director Alexander Payne and wife Sandra Oh have gone from "Sideways" to parting ways, a spokeswoman told People magazine on Saturday. The Hollywood couple "have mutually decided to separate," the spokeswoman said. "They will remain friends."



Oh and Payne

The couple met five years ago and married in 2003. Payne wrote and directed "Sideways," the comedy about two friends on a wine-tasting road trip through California. Payne shared the Academy Award with his previous group, Stone Temple Pilots, saying it made him feel safe and more confident about his music.

Rocker says he's happy to be drug free

Velvet Revolver frontman Scott Weiland says he is off drugs for good, according to the April issue of Esquire magazine.



Weiland

Weiland, whose band won a Grammy last month, credits his sobriety of more than a year to seeing his second marriage crumble because of his addiction. Weiland, 37, said his "preoccupation with catching a buzz" began in his early teens, when he began drinking liquor. He tried cocaine in high school and had moved on to heroin by the time he was 24 and touring with his previous group, Stone Temple Pilots, saying it made him feel safe and more confident about his music.

He said he was motivated to clean up his act and try to get his family back after two arrests in 2003—one for heroin and cocaine possession and the other for driving under the influence. "Right now, for the first time in my life, I'm finally happy," the singer told the magazine.

Stewart's marriage proposal accepted

Rod Stewart has proposed to his longtime girlfriend at the top of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, Stewart's record company said Saturday.

Record label BMG said Stewart, 60, went down into one knee and proposed to 33-year-old Penny Lancaster at the French landmark on Wednesday. She accepted.

"I left it this long, because I wanted to get it right this time," Stewart said in a statement. "I've never been a happier and more in love than I am today."

Lancaster's agent, Nicholas Young, said the couple would make wedding plans once Stewart's divorce from Rachel Hunter is finalized. The raspy-voiced singer was previously married to Alana Stewart.



Lancaster and Stewart

PETA targets J.Lo's fur-wearing ways

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals wants Jennifer Lopez to "Get Right" when it comes to fur.

Lopez introduced her Sweetface fashion collection during New York Fashion Week last month.

"Please don't support Jennifer Lopez or her bloody business," says a Web site at www.jlodown.com—that the animal rights group has devoted to the singer, actress and now fashion designer.

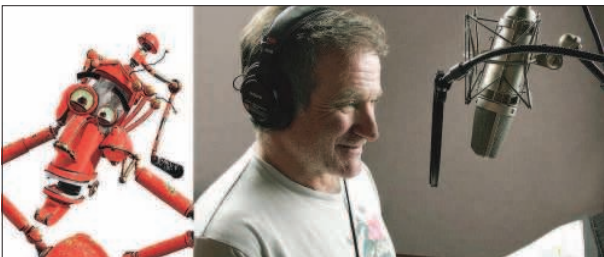
Calls seeking comment from Lopez's publicist were not immediately returned Friday.

The site encourages visitors to "write to J.Lo and tell her that promoting the violence of the fur industry is a low-down, dirty, rotten shame."

"J.Lo knows what animals who are killed for their skins endure," the Web site reads. "PETA has contacted her with letters and videos no less than a dozen times. Lopez may try to convince her fans that her rabbit-trimmed jackets are a must-have, but what she won't tell you is that bunnies killed for fur coats scream as they are skinned alive!"



Lopez



Courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox

Robin Williams provides the voice of the animated character Fender in the movie "Robots."

Robin Williams tuned in to 'toon role in 'Robots'

BY NANCY MILLS
New York Daily News

In an ideal world, Robin Williams would have been born a cartoon.

After all, merely human roles rarely give him the chance to free-assocciate, deliver dozens of accents and leap through his imagination the way no regular person ever does. And, let's face it, when he starts doing his slack offstage, he occasionally wears out his welcome.

With his outsize personality, it's little wonder that Williams has a serious affinity for the animated world. He even took a stand for SpongeBob SquarePants on Oscar night, arriving with his mouth taped shut because producers rejected his plan to sing a satirical song about the undersea character.

"They tell me now that SpongeBob is gay," Williams said, referring to a conservative religious group's criticism that the "toon had a "pro-homosexual" agenda. "SquarePants is not gay," Williams told the Kodak Theatre crowd. "TightPants" — maybe. SpongeBob HotPants? You go, girl!"

When he took the role of the Blue Genie in 1992's "Aladdin," Williams crafted one of the most indelible characters in animation history.

But with "Robots," it's possible that Williams' addictions will begin calling him "Fender." Fender is Williams' first animated role since "Aladdin." The red robot with a coffee-pot for a head may not look much like the 53-year-old comic, but they share a certain manic energy.

Fender is "a Skid Row bum, a man living hand to foot who puts the 'funk' in dysfunctional," Williams says. He also talks non-stop — sound familiar? — and keeps losing body parts to rust.

The performance makes use of Williams' hyperactivity without, as he puts it, "my having to train. Animators can create the physicality I could never get near."

"You get a bit of carte blanche," he adds. "I love doing the voices. I can play and create. You can't find too many parts that allow you such freedom — and it's easier to look at myself."

Since he could easily supply the voices for an entire cast of animated characters, cartoons could be Williams' main source of income, if he didn't love doing stand-up comedy and making live-action movies. Two of the latter will open this year, the coming-of-age tale "House of D" (opening next month) and a black comedy, "The Big White."

Later this year, he'll start production on two more. One is the drama "The Night Listener," based on an Armistead Maupin story. The other is "RV," a comedy Williams says is about "a blue-state guy traveling in a red state."

HOLLYWOOD

For "Robots," director Chris Wedge says all he had to do was turn Williams loose.

"We'd bring Robin ideas and script pages, and he'd very politely read the words we'd written," Wedge says. "Then he'd start lifting off. He'd hit on something and go off for 20 minutes. The glass in the booth would be full of condensation."

Although Wedge admits, "We were able to use only about 1 percent of what he created," they did manage to include his riff on "Singin' in the Rain."

And the eventual DVD outtakes will probably feature a sequence in which Fender's unattached right hand tries to romance his equally on-the-loose left hand — in a heavy Hispanic accent.

Set in a computer-generated world inhabited by mechanical people, "Robots" tells the story of idealistic young Rodney Copperbottom (voiced by Ewan McGregor),

dreams of being an inventor and sets off for the big city with his father's blessing. Naturally, his life does not go smoothly, even with Fender as a close friend.

Williams related to the follow-your-dreams scenario. "I loved the scenes between Rodney and his father because of my dad," he says.

"My dad told me, 'Do what you want to do. I will help you. If you want to be an actor, that's great. Just have a backup profession.'"

"I actually went to one welding class, and the guy teaching it had one eye because he lost the other in a welding accident," he adds.

"But my dad was good with support. Thanks, Dad."

As a father of three — Zach, 21, Zelda, 15, and Cody, 13 — Williams is trying to be equally supportive.

"Zach is studying linguistics right now," he says. "Maybe he'll open a syntax repair shop. Maybe he'll work for a few years and then study law."

"Cody has got a real wry sense of humor," he adds. "He writes very layered, intense poetry. And Zelda has the voices." She'll appear with her father in "House of D."

After some troubled years in which he fought through drug addiction and a messy divorce, Williams seems to be at a peaceful point in his life. Even he has noticed that his comic libido may finally be starting to ebb.

"My wife, Marsha, says that if more than two people come into a room, I go into a certain mode," he says. "But the older I get, the mode gets less like, 'Hello!'"

"It's tiring, but it's invigorating," he adds. "Drama is cathartic, but you feed off comedy. It builds you."

"And sometimes it works the other way. If an audience is not laughing, you'll feed off them — something in an angry way, but sometimes in a challenging way. I can get these people. What is the key?"

"Only later you find out they're deaf."

OPINION

Painful truth is, Bush's declaration untrue

Los Angeles Times

President Bush declared in his State of the Union address, "Torture is never acceptable, nor do we hand over people to countries that do torture." Considering what's come to light since then, the most charitable conclusion is that Bush is completely out of the loop.

In recent weeks, past and present administration officials have confirmed that since September 2001 the Central Intelligence Agency has dispatched between 100 and 150 terror suspects to countries where fine points of law and human rights don't stop beatings, drugging or long isolation.

Before the Sept. 11 attacks, the CIA occasionally engaged in this indefensible practice, known as "extraordinary rendition." But afterward, Bush gave the agency wider license to export prisoners in terror-related cases who hadn't been tried or even charged with any crime. Despite his State of the Union declaration, the president apparently has not revoked that authority.

U.S. law and international conventions bar sending prisoners to another nation unless there are strong assurances of humane treatment.

The CIA says with a straight face that it gets those assurances before delivering suspects to jailers in Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Pakistan — countries that have such abysmal human rights

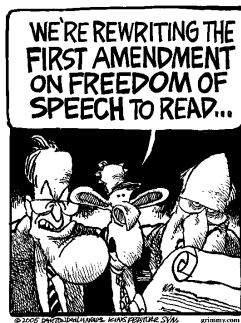
records that promises of decent treatment are a joke.

Bush has argued that tough new rules of engagement are necessary to fight stateless terrorists. But morality aside, what intelligence of value have U.S. officials gleaned from suspects who've been handed off to modern-day dungeons?

A case in point: In 2002, federal agents arrested Maher Arar, a Syrian-born Canadian engineer, at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York because his name appeared on a terrorist watch list. Although Arar insisted that he was not a terrorist, the United States delivered him to Syrian interrogators. After months in a windowless room and regular beatings with thick electric cables, he said, he confessed to anything they wanted just to stop the torment. A year later, Arar was released without charges.

This barbarism is why U.S. judges have refused to condone the indefinite detention of terrorism suspects. Yet the military still holds about 500 foreign national detainees at the U.S. base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Most haven't been charged and have no lawyer, often after years in custody.

Two American citizens have been held in military brigades. The evidence against U.S.-born Yasser Esam Hamdi was so flimsy that last year federal agents packed him off to his family in Saudi Arabia rather than present their case in court. This month, a federal judge ordered the administration to charge the second, Jose Padilla,



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or release him within 45 days. Government lawyers say interrogations produced a lot about Padilla's activities, including his relationship with al-Qaida leaders and his plans to blow up high-rise buildings.

Attorney General Alberto Gonzales said last week he may still prosecute him. But because most of Padilla's disclosures occurred while he was in military custody,



without access to a lawyer, it's doubtful his statements would be admissible in court.

These are only the practical issues. The more haunting problem with Bush's war on terrorism remains the moral one: A nation that considers itself a beacon of freedom seems unable to practice the respect for law and human rights it ardently preaches to others.

Contra-indicated: Ortega again in Nicaragua mix

If you think the Bush administration has enough trouble with Latin America dealing with leftist autocrats in Cuba and Venezuela, consider this: A radical former revolutionary leader may be making a comeback in Nicaragua.

Andres Oppenheimer



Daniel Ortega, the former Sandinista president who after the 1979 revolution cosseted the mansion of a wealthy businessman in the name of social justice and immediately moved in, recently crushed a massive movement within his party to hold primary elections, and had himself declared presidential candidate for the November 2006 elections.

In Washington, Latin America watchers aren't amused: Ortega — in a rare power-sharing alliance with rightist former President Arnoldo Aleman, who is facing charges of illicit enrichment — already controls the Supreme Court, the electoral tribunal, the Comptroller's General office and Congress.

Although his negative ratings in Nicaragua are sky-high and his well-organized Sandinista party has historically had a hard time reaching out beyond its 35 percent hard-core support, Ortega could conceivably win next year's elections.

"Right now, he is in a very strong position," a senior U.S. official told me last week. "All he has to do is run against a divided field, and he is in."

Unlike the leftist presidents of Brazil, Uruguay and Chile, Ortega has shifted back to his radical 1980s rhetoric, and to what many describe as vintage Stalinist practices.

Last month, Ortega staged an inter-

national coup within his party, and expelled popular former Congress Mayor Carlos Levites, who was mounting a challenge to win the party's presidential nomination.

Levites, who was tourism minister during the Sandinista regime in the 1980s and was elected Managua mayor in 2000, is the country's most popular politician.

A recent poll by Borge y Asociados shows that Levites would win a general election with 40 percent of the vote. Among Sandinista sympathizers, he gets 75 percent of the vote, with 18 percent for Ortega.

Levites called for a massive Sandinista rally March 6 to protest Ortega's internal coup, but Ortega had a sympathetic court deny him a permit to hold the demonstration. Levites is challenging the Sandinista expulsion order, and has accused Ortega's gun squads of trying to kill him in a March 3 incident in front of a court where he was summoned to appear.

When I called Levites last week, I got a message on his cellphone saying, "This is

your future president." In an interview later that day, he said his troubles with Ortega started recently, "when Daniel [Ortega] saw that the public squares didn't belong to him anymore, after our massive (pro-Levites) rallies in late February."

Ortega compared the popular ex-mayor with former Presidents Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, who Ortega said had committed "crimes against humanity" by destroying the Soviet Union. Levites countered by charging that Ortega's hard-line backers had recently sold properties and made other business transactions worth more than \$3.8 million.

"Where did they get that kind of money from?" Levites asks.

"Facing these accusations, and knowing that I could prove them, they decided to shut up, and expel me from the party."

"This is a fight between an ultra-radical orthodox wing of the party, and a democratic wing," Levites says. "We're not denying that we will be a leftist government. But it will be a leftist government a la [Chilean

President Ricardo] Lagos, or [Brazilian President Luiz] Lula da Silva."

Ortega is paying a price for his refusal to hold primary elections. Top Sandinista leaders are now backing Levites.

"This is the most serious challenge Ortega has ever faced within his party," says Carlos Fernando Chamorro, a former Sandinista newspaper editor who publishes Confidencial, a political newsletter.

Still, Ortega's ruthless tactics may pay off. While Levites is ahead in the polls, it's doubtful he could run a successful independent candidacy without the 500,000-member Sandinista party machinery.

My conclusion: If the conservative parties are stupid enough — or corrupt enough — to field several candidates, Ortega could win. Nicaragua's democracy is already being kidnapped by a rightist-leftist alliance of mafiosi, and the Bush administration could soon have a major new headache in the region.

Andres Oppenheimer is a Latin America correspondent for The Miami Herald.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



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Horoscope

The sun and Pluto have a tense relationship, strained further by the pressure of a distant ticking clock that rushes us along. Parents are hyper-aware of their children's rate of development. Teens are concerned with grown-up issues, and grown-ups are saying, "Shouldn't I be farther along in life by now?" Use the question as motivation.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(March 14). Love is the magic that keeps you motivated this year. Once you connect with your kindred spirit, you spark a fire that has the potential to burn eternally. Stand up for your ideas in May when you're met with challenge, and you'll prevail both artistically and financially. As long as you know you're right, whatever they may think or do can't possibly matter.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). All is well in your special relationship as long as you stay tuned to your inklings. In business, sensitize yourself to early warning signs that a deal isn't for you. Beware of someone who has no conscience.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You're a regular disturber of the peace! Finally, people are paying attention, though perhaps not in the way you intended. This evening, loved ones impart info that strikes at your very core. Take the time to process it.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). It's now in vogue to use the word "amazing" to describe even the most ordinary pleasant interaction. However, today, you'll have an exchange that truly is amazing — your jaw will drop, and you'll have to catch your breath.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You were gifted with psychic intuition for a reason, so use it — perhaps to leave that bad boyfriend/girlfriend before you even meet. One good decision affects your whole life.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The gods of love are smiling on you. But for the many Leos who are now in

the middle of an important deal, it's important to separate yourself from the outcome — you're holding on so tight that your desire is getting strangled.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're the Polyanna of the group now — wear the role proudly! Optimism helps you stand out from the others. Where colleagues see gloomy clouds and overcast, you see rainbows of possibility.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You look around at your team and wonder, "How did I get lumped in with them?" And when you consider what higher-ups are doing, you can't help but be stunned by the hypocrisy of it all. Be the truth teller.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Sigmund Freud felt that guilt and remorse are often confused, the former stemming from aggressive wishes, the latter a form of self-punishment for the wish fulfilled. Either emotion is useless today. Get over it.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The mythological centaur that is the symbol of your sign was considered both an uncouth, savage beast and a friendly teacher of men. Both of these sides of your nature will be represented today.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Though everyone around seems to be doing the same thing, striving for the same goal, it's about time you identified what is unique about you. It's the only way you'll get the powers that be to take notice.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your curiosity could lead you into a precarious position. Slick around and ask enough questions, and you may be initiated into a mystery of some kind. Watch your step, though, since you won't be able to forget what you learn.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You're a solitary thinker. Decision-making by committee isn't for you right now — in fact, that process irritates you. Ask for all the room you need to work out the problem you're facing.

Creators Syndicate

Holiday Mathis



Calvin and Hobbes



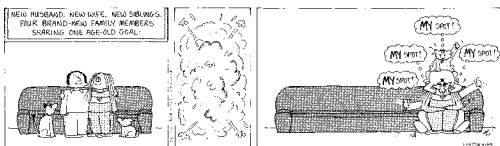
Jump Start



Zits



Cathy



Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



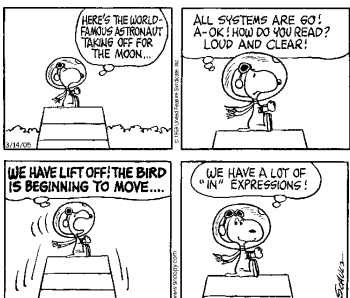
Red Rover



Better or Worse



Peanuts



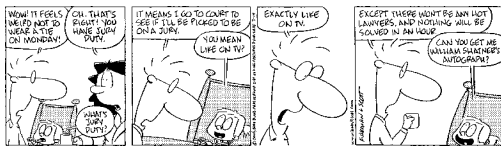
Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



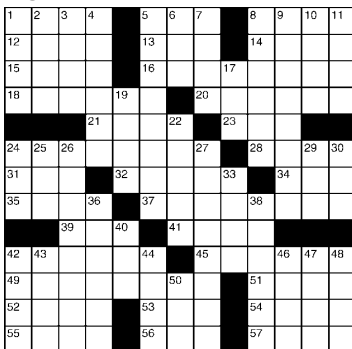
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Unit for Fermi
- 5 Chapel seating
- 8 Channel marker
- 12 Wash
- 13 Eggs
- 14 Arm bone
- 15 Begged
- 16 Gambler's escort?
- 18 Write illegibly
- 20 Super Bowl XXXIX team
- 21 Ear-piercing
- 23 Shell-game item
- 24 Cole Porter's regretful one
- 28 Impale
- 31 Pismire
- 32 Underworld boss?
- 34 BamBI's aunt
- 35 Cozy and warm
- 37 Barry Humphries' alter ego
- 39 Bottom line
- 41 Unwanted e-mail
- 42 Off the right path
- 45 Audience's outcry
- 49 Porridge preparer
- 51 Historic times
- 52 Eternally
- 53 Caustic solution
- 54 Yale alumni
- 55 Fax
- 56 Starred
- 57 "Auld Lang —"
- 2 Aftershave application
- 3 Finished
- 4 Awards
- 5 Contaminated
- 6 Longoria of "Desperate Housewives"
- 7 Test the waters
- 8 Protrusions
- 9 Howled
- 10 Formerly
- 11 Tibetan herd
- 17 Tie-hole
- 19 Unfinished
- 22 Prima donnas
- 24 More, to Caesar
- 25 Hostel
- 26 Action-film workers
- 27 Had a silly smile
- 29 Massachusetts cape
- 30 Sheepish remark?
- 33 Slender
- 36 Actor
- 37 Depardieu
- 38 Bills
- 40 Iowa city
- 43 Rescue
- 46 Paris airport
- 47 Picnic spoiler
- 48 Existence, to Caesar
- 50 Sailor's assent

Answer to Previous Puzzle



Down

- 1 Austrian peaks

3-14 CRYPTOQUIP

ATY AN PQ OAPXFDYH
 JYQI LXXYLHI DA KY
 IDGOJGTS, KFD G OLC'T'D

XFD PQ NGTSYH AT GD.
 Saturday's Cryptquip: I SUPPOSE YOU MIGHT CALL THE PERSON IN CHARGE OF A ROBBERY THE COMMANDER-IN-THIEF.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: O equals C

Peterson wins men's open slalom

Competition tight on final day of U.S. Forces Europe championships

BY BEN MURRAY

Stars and Stripes

GARMISCH, Germany — Crashing through gates with bare forearms Sunday, Staff Sgt. Bradley Peterson turned in two of the day's fastest times to win the men's open division slalom title for active duty service members in the 2005 Chrysler U.S. Forces Europe Ski and Snowboard Championships.

Barreling downhill in a T-shirt on a sunny slope at the Garmisch-Partenkirchen ski resort, the 25-year-old vehicle mechanic from Spangdahlem Air Base fought off a number of contenders to win with a two-run time of 48.86.

Peterson said he chose to wear the tight, white T-shirt because it was the most aerodynamic piece of clothing he'd brought to the mountain.

"I haven't got a downhill suit, so that's what I use," he said.

Sunday's competition capped two days of championship races at Garmisch that started Saturday morning with snowboarding and skiing giant slalom events. A number of the weekend's top racers, including Peterson, fared well in the slalom and giant slalom competitions, with several taking home double gold.

One of those racers was men's military masters-class skier Chief Master Sgt. John Roberto from Gellenkirchen, Germany, who said he wasn't planning to settle for a divisional title Sunday to match his GS performance — Roberto wanted the fastest time of the day.

"I'm going to let 'em rock and roll, [and] see what happens," Roberto said just before his second slalom run Sunday.

Other skiers had similar plans, and winners in several categories turned in times close to Roberto's 50.13, including men's professional winner Gardner Wilgoose, boy's junior champion Sebby Smithback and men's military senior winner Jeremie Oates.

On the women's side, Garmisch local Christina Ellis came away with two gold medals, edging out Vincenza, Italy's Susan Keith in both skiing events in the civilian seniors' division. In the women's open division, Kristina Davis from Oberammergau, Germany ruled the weekend, winning both the slalom and giant slalom, along with Julia Goodwin from Garmisch, who did the same in the girls' junior category.



BEN MURRAY/Stars and Stripes

Ten-year-old Chelsea Smithback digs a furrow in to the slalom course Sunday. Smithback, who had been in contention in the youth girls division before the spill, earned a bronze medal in Saturday's giant slalom.



BEN MURRAY/Stars and Stripes

Ben Reed ducks past a gate on the slalom course Sunday in the 2005 Chrysler U.S. Forces Europe Ski and Snowboard Championships at the Garmisch-Partenkirchen resort.

For the active-duty women on the slopes Saturday and Sunday, masters-class skier Debbie Dickson was the fastest two-plunker in both slalom and giant slalom.

Garmisch skiers dominated most of the younger age divisions. Skiers boys Alex Denikiewicz and Sebby Smithback traded the top two podium spots in the junior events, and junior skiers Anna Denikiewicz and Joyce Ellis did the same for the girls. All four are from Garmisch.

Ten-year-old Ellis said Sunday the short, tight turns of the slalom suited her better than

the wide-open GS, though she had fared well in both.

"I don't like going so fast," she said. "I rather like short turns."

By the end of competition, Garmisch had seen high winds, low temperatures and an overnight snowstorm before the weather broke Sunday. But organizers said that things had gone about as smooth as they could.

"It went great," race organizer David Oakland said. "We lucked out on the weather because the storms came in between the races."

E-mail Ben Murray at: murrayb@mail.estripes.osd.mil

Hanau boys win junior hoop title

BY RUSTY BRYAN

Stars and Stripes

MANNHEIM, Germany — Center Robert Young scored seven of his team's final 12 points Sunday as the Hanau Hornets rallied from a six-point deficit in the final 2 minutes, 33 seconds to claim the 2005 Army-Europe youth services junior basketball championship with a 35-31 victory over the Vogelweh Warriors.

"They were a tough team," Young said after his team completed its unbeaten run through the double-elimination event for players aged 13-15 by erasing a deficit that reached as many as 12 points.

Young scored on a drive into the lane with 1:15 to play to tie the game at 31 and get Hanau even for the first time since early in the first quarter. His free throw 13 seconds later, the last of his 15 points, put Hanau up for good.

The free throw came after Vogelweh's Julian Portillo, who played every minute of every previous game in the tournament, fouled out with 1:02 to play after scoring 20 points, stealing the ball 10 times and collecting 11 rebounds.

"That was our goal, getting him out of the game," said Young, a 15-year-old Hanau High School sophomore. "He's their main man."

While Portillo's foul trouble didn't cost him any playing time except for the last 62 seconds of the game, James Wright's foul trouble took him out of the game. Wright was forced to sit for nearly 10 minutes of the 24-minute game after picking up his third foul with 3:59 to play before halftime. Wright, who scored five points, returned in the final minutes but fouled out with 10 seconds left in the game.

While Wright was sitting, Hanau went to work mounting a 7-1 third-quarter run behind a three-pointer by Antonio Ford and two baskets by Zayne Riggs, who scored 11 points.

The Hornets then turned the game over to Young for the 14-7 fourth-quarter spurt.

"We were never worried," said Ford, an eighth-grader at Hanau Middle School, about his team's playing from behind for more than 19 minutes on Sunday. "We knew we just had to keep our heads in the game."

Hanau 35, Vogelweh 31

(Sunday at Mannheim)

Hanau 35 Vogelweh 31
Scoring: Han: Robert Young 15, Zayne Riggs 11, Antonio Ford 4, Juan Garcia 2, Zach Rogers 2, Latanya Wilson 1; Vog: Julian Portillo 20, James Wright 5, Neo Gaszale 4, Sean Duggan 2.
Title game MVPs: Zayne Riggs, Hanau; Julian Portillo, Vogelweh.

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Wells makes first start for Red Sox

The Associated Press

David Wells made his Boston debut and began looking ahead to Opening Day.

Andy Pettitte is still waiting to make his first start of spring training.

Wells worked two solid innings during the Tampa Bay Devil Rays' 6-4 victory over the Red Sox on Saturday, then said he'd be happy to start opening night April 5 against his former team, the New York Yankees, if Curt Schilling isn't yet recovered from offseason ankle surgery.

"I don't mind taking the ball in any game no matter what, especially a big game, and the first game of the season is going to be a big game," said Wells, who now wears No. 3, the same number one of his favorite players, Babe Ruth, wore with the Yankees.

Pettitte was scratched from his scheduled start for Houston because of a sprained right ankle after falling down stairs at his apartment Friday.

"He's feeling pretty good today and it is not as swollen as we thought it would be," Houston manager Phil Garner said.

Pettitte tested the ankle in a brief session at the Astros' camp Saturday morning. The 32-year-old left-hander is trying to rebound from an injury-plagued 2004 season that included three trips to the disabled list because of elbow problems.

"He probably could have gone a little longer, but we didn't want to push it," Garner said. "We'll give him another bullpen session on Monday and then pitch him in a game later in the week."

After going through rehab for the past eight months, Pettitte pitched three innings in a simulated game Tuesday.

Tim Lincecum replaced Pettitte and struck out four in four scoreless innings to help Houston defeat the Cleveland Indians 7-3 in Winter Haven, Fla.

At Fort Myers, Fla., the

Spring training

41-year-old Wells allowed four hits, one earned run and a wild pitch. He had no walks or strikeouts while throwing 28 pitches, 20 for strikes.

"My only job here is to get in here and win with the Boston Red Sox and try to give them quality innings and try to bring another championship to Boston," Wells said.

B.J. Upton hit a solo home run for Tampa Bay. David Ortiz hit a three-run homer and Trot Nixon added a solo shot for Boston.

In other games:

Yankees 5, Phillies (c) 2: At Tampa, Fla., Hideki Matsui hit a grand slam and Jaret Wright allowed three hits in three scoreless innings.

Twins 4, Blue Jays 1: At Dunedin, Fla., Carlos Silva threw four strong innings for Minnesota.

Nationals 6, Marlins 3: At Jupiter, Fla., Josh Beckett was in the finest performance by any Florida starter this spring, allowing four hits and one unearned run in six innings.

Tigers 4, Braves (c) 0: At Kissimmee, Fla., Tim Lincecum became the first Atlanta starter to give up a run this spring, allowing a homer to Carlos Pena.

Dodgers (c) 0, Orioles 0 (10): At Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Sidney Ponson pitched four strong innings in his first spring start after his debut was delayed by a court case back home in Aruba.

Mets 5, Dodgers 5 (11): At Vero Beach, Fla., Kazuhiro Ishii made a strong case to rejoin Los Angeles' rotation, allowing one hit over four innings in his first start of the spring.

Phillies (c) 10, Braves (c) 9 (12): At Clearwater, Fla., Jim Thome hit a pair of two-run shots and Placido Polanco also hom-



Boston Red Sox pitcher David Wells delivers to Tampa Bay Devil Rays' Delmon Young during the first inning in Fort Myers, Fla., on Saturday.

ered for Philadelphia. Andy Marte homered twice for Atlanta, and Rafael Furcal also homered.

Pirates (c) 13, Reds (c) 2: At Sarasota, Fla., Ty Wigginton went 4-for-5 with two RBIs and Ben Grievie drove in four runs for Pittsburgh.

Pirates (c) 15, Reds (c) 12: At Bradenton, Fla., All-Star shortstop Jack Wilson went 0-for-2 in his first spring start for the Pirates but turned in several impressive defensive plays.

Mets (c) 3, Cardinals 2: At Port St. Lucie, Fla., Matt Morris pitched two strong innings in the spring debut following offseason shoulder surgery, but Tom Glavine tossed four innings of no-hit ball for New York. Carlos Beltran hit his second homer for the Mets, and David Wright had a two-run double.

Giants (c) 2, Royals 1: At Surprise, Ariz., Kansas City closer Jeremy Affeldt left with a strained left groin.

"It's not that serious," Royals manager Tony Pena said. "We don't want to take any chances. I did not hesitate to take him out. Noah Lowry pitched 3 1/2 scoreless innings, allowing three hits and striking out five for the win.

Athletics 7, White Sox 6: At Mesa, Ariz., Nomar Garciaparra hit a three-run shot for his first home run of the spring for Oakland. Carl Everett hit his third homer and a two-run single for the White Sox.

Diamondbacks 4, Padres 3: At Tucson, Ariz., Alex Ciriaco went 4-for-4 with two doubles and Arizona got 10 hits off San Diego starter Adam Eaton.

Angels (c) 8, Cubs 3: At Mesa, Ariz., Nomar Garciaparra homered, doubled and went 3-for-3 for the Cubs. Garrett Anderson hit a two-run homer off Greg Maddux for the Angels. Maddux gave up six hits and two runs in four innings.

Giants (c) 7, Angels (c) 4: At Scottsdale, Ariz., Michael Tucker doubled twice and drove in two for the Giants, and Lou Merloni hit his second triple and drove in two runs for the Angels.

Mariners 8, Rangers 3: At Peoria, Ariz., Raul Ibanez went 3-for-4 with an RBI and left-hander Bobby Madritsch pitched three hitless innings for Seattle.

Brewers 17, Rockies 9: At Tucson, Ariz., W. H. Welch hit two home runs and the Milwaukee Brewers pounded out 20 hits against Colorado.

Players' association head Donald Fehr, Major League Baseball executive vice presidents Rob Manfred and Sandy Alderson, and Diego Bonilla, general manager Kevin Towers have been called to appear.

Report: Jeremy Giambi admits to steroid use

The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Former major league Jeremy Giambi, who played one injury-plagued season for the Boston Red Sox, admitted he used steroids. The Kansas City Star reported Sunday.

"It's something I did," Giambi told the newspaper. "I moved. I made a mistake. I apologized. I kind of want it in the past."

Giambi, the younger brother of Yankees star Jason Giambi, signed a minor league contract with the Chicago White Sox on Tuesday.

Jeremy Giambi broke into the big leagues in 1998 with Kansas City, then played with his brother in Oakland from 2000-01.

Jason Giambi won the AL MVP Award in 2000, and his younger brother had his best season the next year, hitting .283 with 12 homers and 57 RBIs in 371 at-bats.

The younger Giambi has also played for Philadelphia.

His last stint in the majors was in 2003, when he batted .197 in 127 at-bats with the Red Sox. He missed most of last season with a herniated disc. Signed by the Dodgers, he didn't play in a big league game.

While he did not specifically say his brother used steroids, Jeremy Giambi noted a news conference in 2003 in which his brother said he was using steroids in New York during which he apologized profusely, but did not say why he was apologizing.

"If you don't know what he's apologizing for," Jeremy Giambi said, "you must be in a coma for two years."

Jeremy Giambi declined to be specific about his steroid use. He told the newspaper he wants to come clean about steroids and hopes others will do the same.

"They're not good for you," the younger Giambi said. "I think we need to reach out and let teenagers know they're not good for your body and not good for your health."

It was the elder Giambi who introduced his brother to steroids, according to a transcript of the BALCO grand jury proceedings, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. When he testified before the grand jury, Jeremy Giambi said he used steroids in cream and liquid form and injected human growth hormone and testosterone.

The Yankees on Saturday declined a request by the Star to interview Giambi.

In January, baseball adopted a harsher steroid-testing policy.

"Baseball has taken a step forward," the younger Giambi said. "People need to realize that and let it work. I wouldn't want to be the first one to get caught. It might be worse than a murder trial."

Selig unhappy about congressional hearing

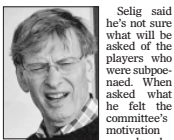
By STEPHEN HAWKINS

The Associated Press

PEORIA, Ariz. — Commissioner Bud Selig is unhappy about the upcoming congressional hearing on steroids because he thinks baseball has already adopted a strong testing program.

The House Government Reform Committee has subpoenaed seven current or former players and four baseball executives to testify at a hearing March 17. The committee's hearing has said it will fight the subpoena.

"I am very protective of the players, and there has to be a sense of fairness," Selig said Saturday. "If I sound a bit elevated, it's for that reason. We made agreements and we are doing the things we promised to do."



Selig

Selig said he's not sure what will be asked of the players who were subpoenaed. When asked what he thought the committee's motivation was, he deferred.

"I let you all make that judgment," Selig told reporters during the Seattle Mariners' spring training game against the Texas Rangers.

Under pressure from Congress, baseball and its players agreed in January to a tougher steroid-testing program that added penalties for first-time offenders (10-day

suspensions) and random, year-round tests.

"It's an evolving policy. When we went to testing, it was called weak and toothless," Selig said. "But we started at 7 percent (testing positive), now we're down to 1-2 percent. I believe while this policy isn't exactly what I want, it's the best that could be done in collective bargaining."

"I'm comfortable and very confident in telling you that we will really reduce the usage."

The previous policy called only for treatment after a first positive test. No player was suspended for steroid use in 2004, the first season of testing with penalties.

The players subpoenaed for next week's hearing are former stars Mark McGwire and Jose Canseco and current players

Jason Giambi, Sammy Sosa, Curt Schilling, Frank Thomas and Rafael Palmeiro.

Selig said he wasn't sure about any attempts by baseball officials to negotiate a deal with Congress that would excuse the players from testing.

The commissioner, who addressed a Senate panel about steroids last year, was not subpoenaed, but said he was willing to attend the hearings.

"I do whatever is in the best interest of the sport, and if I believe that's it, you bet I'll be there," he said.

Players' association head Donald Fehr, Major League Baseball executive vice presidents Rob Manfred and Sandy Alderson, and Diego Bonilla, general manager Kevin Towers have been called to appear.

Edwards' flat allows Martin to add win 47

BY TOM GARDNER

The Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Mark Martin moved into the lead when seemingly unstoppable Carl Edwards was sidelined by a flat tire, extending his record for Busch Series victories to 47 Saturday at Las Vegas Motor Speedway.

Martin picked up his second Busch win this season, following his victory at California two weeks ago.

Edwards, making just his sixth Busch start, shot away from the field after taking his first series pole and dominated for 125 of the 200 laps in the Sam's Town 300 until the right rear tire went down on lap 186, sending him spinning into the infield.

"I had a little luck today. Carl Edwards was in a position to win that one," Martin said of his Roush Racing teammate. "I was just lucky to get into the front."

"He was just checked out. There wasn't much we could do

about it. That one just slipped through his fingers."

Martin seized on Edwards' misfortune when his teammate's right rear tire failed.

"I knew Carl had a problem down the back stretch and I knew at that point the race could be on between [Stremme and me]."

As Martin swept to a 1.412-second victory — about 14 car lengths — Kevin Harvick and David Stremme battled for second. Harvick passed on the last turn of the final lap and edged Stremme by the length of his hood.

Joe Nemechek finished fourth and Greg Biffle fifth. Reed Sorenson was sixth, and Edwards worked his way up to seventh, despite the tire problems.

Stremme was handicapped in the late going by a cranky gearshift lever he had to hold while he was trying to steer the car around the 1.5-mile Las Vegas oval.

"It's pretty hard driving one-handed around this slippery track," he said.

Els comes out on top again in Middle East

The Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar — Ernie Els won his second straight tournament in the Middle East, rallying to take the Qatar Masters on Sunday by one shot after carding a 7-under 65 in the final round.

The third-ranked South African, who finished with a 12-under 276, fired seven birdies to come from a five-stroke deficit and edged Henrik Stenson of Sweden at the Doha Golf Course. Stenson shot a 71 on Sunday.

Richard Green of Australia and Pierre Fulke of Sweden tied for third at 9 under.

Els also won the Dubai Desert Classic last week.

Ogilvy makes up eight strokes, moves into tie for lead

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. — Australia's Geoff Ogilvy overcame an eight-shot deficit at the start of play Saturday, shooting an 8-under-par 64 to tie tie Brett Wetterich for the lead after three rounds in the Honda Classic.

Wetterich, bidding for his first PGA Tour victory, began the day alone in the lead but scrambled to a 72 and joined Ogilvy at 12-under 204.

Two-time U.S. Open champion Lee Janzen, seeking his first tour title since 1998, bogeyed No. 18 to fall out of a three-way tie for the lead. A round of 72 left him one stroke off the pace and tied with Pat Perez (67) at 11 under.

With the greens firmer than in the first two rounds and winds still strong, bogeys became more frequent on the long Country Club at Mirasol course.

Ogilvy, who won his first title in 1997, Tour starts two weeks ago at Tucson, struggled to a 73 in the opening round but began to surge Saturday when he birdied

Golf roundup

four of the first six holes. He also birdied Nos. 17 and 18.

"I just kept hitting nice shots and getting good putts," he said. "Maybe six months ago, sneaking right up the leader board deep on Saturday, I might have gotten a bit more nervous than I did. I was not being comfortable."

No. 2-ranked Vijay Singh, the lone player entered among the world's top six, shot 70 and was 6 under. Todd Hamilton, the champion last year, shot 72 and was 4 under.

Wetterich and Janzen, playing in their final twosome, swapped the lead three times early. They struggled on the back nine, where most of the holes went into the wind, and slipped back to Ogilvy on the leader board.

Fergus leads SBC Classic after 7-under 65

SANTA CLARITA, Calif. — Keith Fergus shot a 7-under 65 to take a one-shot lead over Mark McNulty after two rounds of the Champions Tour's SBC Classic.

The 51-year-old Fergus, a former golf coach at Houston and three-time winner in 14 years on the PGA Tour, had six birdies and a bogey on the Valencia Country Club course for a 7-under 137 total.

McNulty shot a 66 to move to 138, two strokes ahead of Gary McCord (66) and D.A. Weirberg (69). Mike Reid was in fifth place at 141 after a second-round 71, and 62-year-old lead Ayers, the first-round leader, followed an opening 69 with a 73, dropping to 142.



Bode Miller, left, and Anja Paerson show their World Cup overall trophies after the final event on Sunday.

Paerson hangs on to overall title Swede edges Kostelic by three points

BY ERICA BULMAN

The Associated Press

LENZERHEIDE, Switzerland — Sweden's Anja Paerson held off Croatia's Janica Kostelic to win the overall World Cup title Sunday in a competition that came down to the final skier in the final race of the season.

"Janica and I were both standing there in the finish, and we weren't sure who was going to win," Paerson said. "That's the way it ski racing should be." Finland's Tanja Poutiainen, who already had clinched the slalom championship, captured the giant slalom title.

Spain's Marie Jose Rienda Contreras, the last skier of the day, won the final giant slalom in 2 minutes, 20.18 seconds. Poutiainen was second in 2:20.48, and Nicole Hosp of Austria was third in 2:20.69.

Paerson won the championship by three points after entering the race with a 35-point lead over Kostelic in the overall standings.

She would have automatically won the title by finishing ahead

of the Croat. But Kostelic was eighth and Paerson 17th.

Kostelic and Paerson hugged after the race, and then Kostelic kissed her Swedish rival on the cheek before pushing her into the center of the finish area.

"Maybe we're not best friends, but we appreciate each other as skiers," Paerson said. "I admire her. We're both great skiers."

The Swede seemed on track to retain her overall title in the opening leg, finishing ahead of Kostelic, but things got tricky for Paerson in the second run.

Kostelic managed another strong performance in the second leg, crossing fourth. Paerson, running next, was uncharacteristically slow in her favorite discipline, finishing just within the points in 13th place with four racers to go.

Kostelic could have secured the title by finishing seventh or higher as last Paerson fell out of the top 15. At the World Cup finals, only the top 15 finishers score points.

With one skier left, Kostelic was seventh and Paerson was al-

ready out of the top 15. But Rienda Contreras delivered a sizzling final run — overcoming a mistake where she went wide — to win the race and give Paerson the overall title by bumping Kostelic to eighth.

Paerson finished the season with 1,359 overall points, followed by Kostelic with 1,356.

In the men's final event on Sunday, Austria's Mario Matt won the slalom — his first victory in more than four years — and newly crowned overall champion Bode Miller completed a slalom for just the second time this season.

Matt, the 2001 world champion, maintained his lead from the first run to complete the sun-drenched course in a combined time of 1 minute, 22.81 seconds. He was fastest in the opening run and third in the second.

Alois Vogl of Germany was second in 1:23.54 and Rainer Schönböck of Austria was third in 1:23.55.

Miller finished in sixth place. He was 13th after a mistake in the opening leg but delivered a blistering second run.

Vikings sign ex-Packer Sharper

The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — The Minnesota Vikings signed veteran safety Darren Sharper to a four-year contract on Saturday.

Sharper, cut by the Green Bay Packers in a cost-cutting move last week, started at free safety the past six seasons and ranks fifth in team history with 36 interceptions. He led the team with four interceptions last year and scored three defensive touchdowns.

"Darren is very excited to be going to Minnesota," agent Joel Segal told The Associated Press.

The Packers tried to get Sharper to restructure his deal, but he balked at a pay cut, hoping he could make more on the open market than the approximately \$2 million Green Bay was offering for 2005.

The Vikings were only too happy to have him fall

into their laps.

"He's a great playmaker and has been a nemesis of ours for years," Vikings vice president of football operations Rob Brzezinski said. "He's an outstanding leader and will be a tremendous addition to our defense."

BC player injured during raid on home

BOSTON — Boston College guard Jermaine Watson jumped from a second-story window to escape gun-toting masked men who burst into his off-campus apartment, police said.

Watson cut his ear and left hand early Saturday. He sat out practice that day but coach Al Skinner expected the senior to return to the court Sunday in preparation for the NCAA tournament.

"He said he's OK and he wants to play," Skinner said.

There were no arrests in connection with the raid, which appeared to stem from a dispute during a party at Watson's apartment.

Sports briefs

'Happy birthday, coach'

Oklahoma St. gives Sutton a victory over Kansas

BY DOUG TUCKER
The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The first day of Eddie Sutton's 70th year will produce a coaching matchup for the ages.

Joey Graham scored 25 points, four on free throws in the final 41.4 seconds, as Oklahoma State marked Sutton's 69th birthday with a 78-75 victory over No. 9 Kansas in the Big 12 tournament semifinals.

"I have had a lot of disappointments on my birthday," said Sutton, who was serenaded by fans' shouts of "Happy birthday!" "Today is one of those days. I had a good 69th."

The No. 10 Cowboys shot 57 percent in the second half to the 64 percent of Kansas, which got 30 points from Wayne Simien, the Big 12 player of the year.

"It's tough when the Big 12 tournament is your goal as a freshman, you don't get a chance to cut down the nets," the 6-foot-8 senior said.

Graham, who set a Big 12 record this season by hitting 39

fool shots in a row, sank two to give the Cowboys a three-point lead with 10 seconds left. Then Alex Galindo missed a long three-pointer at the buzzer.

"It was a set play," said Aaron Miles, the senior point guard for Kansas (23-6). "I knew they would be on J.R. [Giddens] tight. Galindo got the shot but it didn't go in."

Besides the right to meet Texas Tech in the title game, the teams may have been playing for the right to go to Oklahoma City next week for the opening round of the NCAA tournament. It's the closest first-round site for either school and an easy drive for fans.

"I would be disappointed if we don't go to Oklahoma City," Sutton said. "We have Game East 11 of the last 12 times."

Kansas coach Bill Self, an Oklahoma native, was still hopeful.

"We should both be there," he said. "But whether or not it plays out that way I don't know because they might put [Oklahoma] there, too. I don't think they'll put all three of us there."

The Cowboys (23-6) missed 12 of their first 14 shots but then got hot and took the lead for good when Daniel Bobik stole the ball on Kansas' end of the court and drove for a layup that made it 60-59.

JamesOn Curry had 12 points for the Cowboys and John Lucas, Bobik and Ivan McFarlin each had 11.

Graham, fouled deliberately with 41.4 seconds left, hit both foul shots for a 75-70 lead. Simien answered with a soft, feather hook shot and shaved the lead back to three.

"This is what college basketball is all about," Graham said. "Just getting the opportunity to come out and play is wonderful."

Lucas, fouled with 22.8 seconds to go, hit one of two and the Cowboys led 76-72 until Giddens sank the Jayhawks' fifth straight three-pointer.

With 11.8 seconds to go and a one-point lead, the Cowboys rebounded the ball to Graham, who was fouled immediately.

Texas Tech 69, No. 17 Oklahoma 63: Ronald Ross scored 28 points and Jarriss Jackson had 22, both career highs, to help Texas Tech (20-9) reach its first Big 12 tournament final. Terrell Everett led the top-seeded Sooners (24-7) with 15 points.

The Red Raiders drew 27 fouls and shot 24-for-33 from the line, compared to Oklahoma's 11-for-19. Ross was 10-for-11. The Red Raiders' defense was perfect until he missed the front end of a two-shot foul in the closing seconds.



Oklahoma State's John Lucas, left, and Jeff Johnson, right, jump for joy after the Cowboys' 78-75 victory over Kansas in a semifinal game of the Big 12 tournament. OSU faces Texas Tech in the final.

No. 1 Illini make sure to win one for Weber

BY JIM PAUL
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Illinois had its 14-point lead shaved to two with 6 minutes to go. But the top-ranked Illini weren't going to let this game slip away.

They wouldn't add a tragic loss to coach Bruce Weber's losing weekend.

Illinois (31-1) held Minnesota without a field goal for the final 4:05 on the way to a 64-56 victory Saturday and a trip to the Big Ten tournament championship game for the third straight season. The Illini will face Wisconsin, a 59-56 winner over Iowa.

The Illini also tied a school record for victories, matching the mark set by the 1988-89 Flyin' Illini team that went to Final Four.

"We say we're a family. That's what we emphasized all year," said forward James Augustine, who was the first to put an arm around his coach after the game. "We're all with him."

Weber coached the game less than 24 hours after his mother, 81-year-old Dawn Weber, died at a Chicago hospital following emergency heart surgery. He said he never doubted he'd be on the sideline.

"I'm proud of the kids and happy to be back in the championship game," Weber said. "I don't want to be the story. The kids have got to be the story."

The Illini wore black bands on their jerseys in memory of Dawn Weber, and the emotional drama showed early in what became a somewhat sloppy performance. They committed a season-high 23 turnovers and shot just 36 percent from the field.

"We were probably feeling a little too emotional," said Luther Head, who led Illinois with 14 points. "We're feeling the same way here."

The Illini got going midway through the half and took a 14-13 lead on the first of Head's four three-pointers. A 14-0 run turned a 13-8 deficit into a 22-8 lead and Illinois led 30-26 at halftime.

Head's fourth three-pointer put the Illini ahead 44-35 with 12 minutes left. But Illinois missed its next four shots and committed three turnovers, allowing Minnesota to go on a 16-4 run.

Vincenzo Scott, a senior in Robinson scored all 16 points.

Deron Williams broke Illinois' drought with a three-pointer, but Bobby Davis' trailing three-pointer and Grier doubled it to 53-51.

Roger Powell Jr. converted a three-point play that pushed the Illini lead back to five, and then phoned in a winning three-pointer at the buzzer to stun Iowa.

Tucker finished with 20 points on 7-for-12 shooting and Zach Morley added 17 for the Hawkeyes (22-7). Greg Brunner led Iowa (21-11) with 18 points.

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Thankx to Hayes' late plays, Kentucky in SEC title game

BY PAUL NEWBERRY
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Chuck Hayes threw his arms in the air and let out a scream. Tubby Smith pumped his fist furiously as he ran along the sideline. Kentucky usually takes the Southeastern Conference tournament in stride, but the Wildcats couldn't contain themselves.

This one was worth celebrating.

Hayes spun into the lane to hit the winning shot with 7.9 seconds left in overtime Saturday, giving the No. 4 Wildcats a 79-78 victory over LSU and a chance to play for another SEC tournament title.

"Certainly, it gives us the belief that we can win close games," said Smith, the Wildcats' coach.

Brandon Bass hit a miraculous shot for the Tigers as the buzzer sounded in regulation, forcing overtime with the score tied at 70. "I thought the game was over,"

Bass said. "I really thought we were done one. It was a big shot, but it would have been bigger if we had won the game."

LSU built a five-point lead in the extra period, but it wasn't enough to hold off the Wildcats and the weight of history.

Kentucky (25-4) will be going for its third straight SEC tournament title, its 11th in 14 years and 26th overall. LSU (20-9) has won it only once, way back in 1980.

After its last two championships, the Wildcats didn't even bother cutting down the nets. They may call for the scissors if they beat Florida on Sunday — especially with the way they survived the semifinals.

Patrick Sparks hit a crucial three-pointer from the corner to spark the Kentucky comeback, and he helped alone. When LSU's Glen Davis missed two free throws with 39 seconds left.

Kelenna Azubuike, who led the Wildcats with 19 points, drew a foul and made the first of two free throws to put Kentucky to 78-77. When the second attempt clanked off the rim, Hayes swooped in to grab the offensive rebound.

Kentucky called timeout and set up a play for its senior leader, even though he had made only 2 of 9 shots. The Wildcats worked their ball inside to Hayes, who spun around the 300-pound Davis and banked in a shot with his left hand.

"The whole game I had been predicting to see what the defense was going to do," Hayes said. "But that time, I just told myself to make a quick move, get it up in the rim and give it a chance to go in."

Sparks set a crucial pick that gave Hayes room to operate around the massive Davis.

"It should have been the green," the LSU freshman said. "I should have felt the pick and gotten over there."

The Tigers still had time, but Tack Minor drove wildly into the lane and lost the ball while trying to put up the shot. Appropriately, Hayes grabbed it as the horn sounded to send the Wildcats to the title game against Florida.

"Chuck is the key and the glue," Smith said.

Nearly everyone in the Georgia Dome crowd of 24,214 was wearing blue.

"This Kentucky following is amazing," LSU coach John Brady said. "For our team to come in here and play well in this environment has to help our team out, even in losing."

Florida 68, No. 20 Alabama 62: David Lee scored 20 points and Matt Walsh hit six free throws in the final 17 seconds as Florida held on to reach the championship game for the second straight year.

Walsh finished with 17 points. Anthony Robinson had 13 points and Brewer added 10 for Florida (22-7). Kennedy Winston led Alabama (24-7) with 19 points.

Florida faced its own history as well as Kentucky in Sunday's final. The Gators have never won the SEC tournament, losing four times in the final — including 89-83 to Kentucky last year.

Then again, Florida did beat Kentucky in the regular-season finale last weekend, pulling off a 53-52 upset in Gainesville, Fla.

Georgia Tech victory 'too upset'

Yellow Jackets top Heels, to face Duke in ACC final

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Rashad McCants followed his North Carolina teammates through the tunnel toward the locker room, wearing a stunned look while biting the front of his white jersey.

The second-ranked Tar Heels had just lost 78-75 to Georgia Tech in the Atlantic Coast Conference tournament semifinals Saturday after McCants missed a three-pointer that would have forced overtime.

The junior guard let out a groan and let the jersey fall from his teeth.

"You know," he said with a sigh, "that was supposed to go in."

The top-seeded Tar Heels were supposed to win their first ACC title since 1998, but that didn't happen, either.

Will Bynum scored a career-high 35 points, and the fifth-seeded Yellow Jackets advanced to the ACC championship game Sunday against Duke with a stunning upset of the league's regular-season champions.

Did somebody say upset? "This was no upset out there today. I want to make that point clear," Georgia Tech coach Paul Hewitt said. "These are two great teams, and our team, that is a team that I think has accomplished a lot at

big moments ... to be written off was kind of amusing to me."

After Bynum capped his magnificent performance by making two foul shots with nine seconds left, McCants' three-point try bounced off the front of the rim and into the waiting arms of Tech's Jarred Jack, who clutched the ball until time expired.

The Yellow Jackets celebrated, but with a good measure of restraint.

"It's not a surprise, it's not a shock to us," Jack said. "We knew we could come in here and compete with any team in our conference, as well as any team in the country."

Thanks to Bynum, whose 35 points is the most by a Georgia Tech player in the ACC tournament, surpassing the 33 by Mark Price against Virginia in 1983.

"It was big, but I would rather have scored two and won anyway," a teary-eyed Bynum said at the postgame news conference. "As long as we get the win, that's what counts."

At that point, Hewitt interjected. "I was fun watching the 35, I'll tell you."

Georgia Tech, which lost to North Carolina 77-62 during the regular season, will play for the league title against fifth-ranked Duke, which beat North Carolina State 76-69 in the other semifinal.

J.J. Redick carried the Blue Devils to their seventh consecutive final with a spectacular individual effort, making seven three-pointers and scoring 35 points.

A day earlier, Redick missed 11 of his first 12 shots and finished 4-for-17 against Virginia, but his teammates picked up the slack. Their efforts certainly were appreciated in this one, even if Redick needed little help.

"Just having the mentality to take the next shot," he said. "I didn't really dwell on it. I was 4-for-17. I knew eventually my shots would fall."

He surpassed Ronnie Meyer's previous school record of 34 points for an ACC tournament game, set in the 1955 semifinals.

"J.J.'s performance was one of the best ever," Blue Devils coach Mike Krzyzewski said.

Redick made the most of a quick reminder from his coach to score at least 30 points for the fourth time this season.

"Coach just talked to me about thinking of whoever is guarding me," Redick said. "To set my shot up before I ever took it. I did that."

Shen Williams added 15 points and Daniel Ewing had 14 for the third-seeded Blue Devils, who held on despite missing six free throws in a row down the stretch.



North Carolina's Javaw Williams reacts after the Tar Heels lost to Georgia Tech.

The Wolfpack (19-13) couldn't take advantage. Iliyan Evtimov and Engin Atsura each missed three in the final minute that would have cut the deficit to three, and N.C. State was left hoping its spirited effort during the first two days was enough to secure an at-large bid to the NCAA tournament.

"I think we proved some people wrong this tournament," guard Cameron Bennerman said. "It feels good to perform well. For me, it's a hard pill to swallow right now, because I thought we could have won. But I'm trying to put it behind me and see what we have for the NCAAs."

Conference tournaments

America East

Championship
Saturday
Vermont 80, Northeastern 57

Atlantic Coast

Friday
North Carolina 85, Clemson 81
Georgia Tech 73, Virginia Tech 54
Duke 81, Wake Forest 65
Duke 76, Virginia 64
Saturday
Georgia Tech 78, North Carolina 75
Duke 76, N.C. State 62
Sunday
Duke 69, Georgia Tech 64

Atlantic 10

Friday
Saint Joseph's 73, Xavier 68
George Washington 77, Temple 58
Championship
Saturday
George Washington 78, Saint Joseph's 67

Big East

Friday
West Virginia 78, Villanova 76
Syracuse 67, Connecticut 63
Championship
Saturday
Syracuse 68, West Virginia 59

Big Ten

Friday
Illinois 68, Villanova 51
Indiana 52, Iowa 48
Iowa 71, Michigan State 49
Saturday
Illinois 64, Minnesota 56
Syracuse 69, Iowa 56
Sunday
Illinois vs. Wisconsin

Big 12

Friday
Oklahoma 83, Missouri 79
Texas Tech 64, Iowa State 66
Kansas 80, Kansas State 67
Saturday
Oklahoma State 87, Colorado 85
Sunday
Texas Tech 69, Oklahoma 63
Oklahoma State 78, Kansas 75
Texas Tech vs. Oklahoma State

Big West

Friday
Pacific 63, Cal State Northridge 61
Utah State 84, Cal State Fullerton 77
Championship
Saturday
Utah State 62, Pacific 52

Conference USA

Friday
Louisville 64, Alabama-Birmingham 64
Memphis 81, South Florida 78
Championship
Saturday
Louisville 75, Memphis 74

Mid-American

Friday
Ohio 63, Miami (Ohio) 55
Buffalo 75, Western Michigan 68
Championship
Saturday
Ohio 80, Buffalo 79 (OT)

Mid-Eastern Athletic

Friday
Delaware 61, South Carolina 48
Hampton 62, Coppin State 50
Championship
Saturday
Delaware State 55, Hampton 53

Mountain West

Friday
Utah 73, UNLV 67
New Mexico 77, San Diego State 67
Championship
Saturday
New Mexico 60, Utah 56

Pacific-10

Friday
Arizona 90, Oregon State 79
Washington 68, Stanford 63
Championship
Saturday
Washington 81, Arizona 72

Patriot League

Championship
Friday
Bucknell 61, Holy Cross 57

Southwestern

Friday
Alabama 69, Mississippi State 64
Kentucky 76, Tennessee 62
LSU 89, Auburn 58
Saturday
Florida 68, Alabama 62
Kentucky 79, LSU 70
Sunday
Florida 70, Kentucky 53

Southeastern

Championship
Friday
SE Louisiana at Northwestern State

Southwestern Athletic

Friday
Alabama State 54, Southern U. 50
Alabama A&M 54, Jackson State 56
Championship
Saturday
Alabama A&M 72, Alabama State 53

Western Athletic

Friday
Idaho State 85, Rice 77
Texas State 86, Fresno State 85
Championship
Saturday
Texas State 91, Boise State 78

The Associated Press

DENVER — The selection committee can stop worrying about New Mexico. A lot of NCAA tournament teams out there probably ought to start, though.

The Lobos made their invitation to the NCAAs a formality Saturday night, getting 28 points, 11 rebounds and four straight clutch free throws from Danny Granger in a 60-56 victory over No. 15 Utah in the Mountain West Conference championship game.

Playing as though their season was at stake — even though it probably wasn't by this point — the second-seeded Lobos (26-6) jumped on Andrew Bogut and the top-seeded Utes (27-5) early and kept them an arm's distance away most of the way.

And when Bogut (19 points, 16 rebounds) triggered a 9-2 run that gave the Utes a 49-48 lead with 3:35 left — their first since midway through the first half — New Mexico responded. Alfred Neele slammed home a miss for a 50-49 lead. David Chioiti made a shot that felled Bogut and led to an easy layup.

After two Utah free throws made it 52-51, Granger made two huge baskets, forcing a shot over a defender under the basket for one score, then dribbling to the baseline and shaking loose from defender Mark Jackson for an open 15-footer that he buried for a 56-51 lead.

Bogut responded with a three-pointer with 21 seconds left, but Granger countered by sinking four free throws down the stretch to keep it a two-possession game.

When the buzzer sounded, center Ambrose Osby sprang off the bench and did two handsprings — cheerleader style — then the Lobos went into the crowd to cele-

Conference finals

brate along with the thousands who followed them up Interstate 25 to watch them earn their first trip since 1999. The win capped off a day that began when New Mexico beat Utah for the women's championship.

For the men, it was the ninth straight win and 12th in the past 13. Two of those wins have come against Utah, the league's regular-season champion, which will also certainly earn an at-large bid for its fourth straight trip to the NCAAs.

But the Mountain West's biggest threat could very well be the Lobos, who won their first conference tourney since 1996 — when Dave Bliss was coach and they played in the Western Athletic Conference.

They were on the tournament bubble because of their low RPI rating (85th) and ultra-weak strength of schedule (298), but have more than put to rest all those misgivings over a torrid stretch that began with a win over UNLV at The Pit on Jan. 29.

Granger scored 18 of his points in the first half and well-oiled Bogut, who was "held" to just 19 points by a defense that fronted him with Chioiti, then brought help from the back-side forward.

Despite that success, the Lobos couldn't build their lead into double digits and when the Utes shut down Granger through most of the second half, it was clear this one would come down to the wire.

It did — but it was Granger, not Bogut, who wound up holding the trophy and being named the tournament's Most Valuable Player.

The Lobos, who were serenaded

by chants of "Never Rated!" from Utah fans in the pregame warmups, stayed around to cut down the nets. And then, it was Lobos fans doing the chanting and shouting. "Overrated!" and "NIT!" to the Utes.

Western Athletic Conference

UTEP 91, Boise State 78: At Reno, Nev., Filiberto Rivera scored 17 of his 32 points in the last 6 minutes to help Texas El-Paso hold off Boise State.

John Toft added 21 points. Omar Thomas had 15 and Giovanni St. Amant 13 for the second-seeded Miners (27-7), who shot 67 percent from the field in the second half to secure an automatic bid to the NCAA tournament.

Coby Karl had 24 points for the eighth-seeded Broncos (16-18).

Atlantic 10

George Washington 76, Saint Joseph's 67: At Cincinnati, T.J. Thompson led a late 12-point run to help George Washington (22-7) win its first Atlantic 10 tournament title and first NCAA berth in six years.

Pat Carroll had 25 points for Saint Joseph's (19-11).

Mid-American

Ohio 80, Buffalo 79, OT: Cleveland — Freshman Leon Williams made a layup in the final second as Ohio, down by 19 points in the second half, rallied to win the Mid-American Conference championship for its first NCAA berth since 1994.

Williams finished with a career-high 29 points and 15 rebounds and was selected the named the tournament MVP. Jeremy Fears added 21 points for the Bobcats (21-12).

Turner Battle had 22 points for the Bulls (22-9).

Psst! Huskies in

Whispering campaign leads to shouts of joy as Washington tops Arizona for Pac-10 title

BY BETH HARRIS
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Little Nate Robinson and 14th-ranked Washington kept whispering to Salim Stoudamire's Arizona teammates.

At the buzzer, the Huskies were the ones shouting with joy at winning the school's first Pac-10 tournament title.

Robinson scored six points — his only points of the second half — in the final 67 seconds as Washington upset of No. 8 Arizona 81-72 on Saturday despite a brilliant 37-point performance by the Wildcats' Damon Stoudamire.

Robinson defended Stoudamire and compared it to playing without his hands. "You just got to run around and chase him," he said. "We said, 'He's going to score, but we can't let the role players get their 15 (points) and 8 (rebounds).'"

"You've got to keep telling the other guys, 'He doesn't want to pass you the ball,' and that's what we did," said Robinson, a shy smile on his face. "A couple whis- per ... it kills the other team's confidence."

Robinson joked that he told Stoudamire he'd have to score 100 to beat the Huskies. Asked if he really said that, Robinson replied, "I guess he would have gone for 50."

The Huskies (27-5) closed the game with a 19-4 run to earn the conference's automatic bid to the NCAA tournament, although Arizona (27-5) is assured of a berth, too.

Washington coach Lorenzo Romar compared the game to a prize fight.

"One punch after another," he said. "Arizona brings out the best in us because for so long they have been the best."

The Huskies won three tournament games

by a combined 17 points; Arizona won its first two by a total of 56 points.

"No question the team that played the hardest won the ballgame," Arizona coach Luke Olson said. "They're one of the few teams that can send five people to the offensive boards and are quick enough to recover defensively."

Robinson and Tre Simmons led the Huskies with 18 points each and Jamaal Williams added 16.

Stoudamire, who finished two of the tournament scoring record set by UCLA's Reggie Miller, hit seven three-pointers and the teams combined for 17 three-pointers — both tournament records. He was selected turnkey MVP.

But he couldn't help the Wildcats to a record fifth tournament title. They are 4-1 in championship games.

"I wanted to be the guy that everyone looks up to, but at the same time, we got to stay with in the team concept," Stoudamire said. "We got away from that."

The Huskies scored six straight and tied it at 70 on two free throws by Bobby Jones after Chris Rodgers was called for holding with 3:34 remaining.

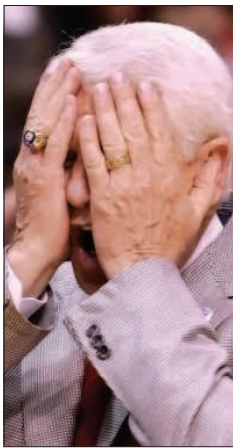
Arizona's Channing Frye scored inside before Will Conroy hit his fourth three-pointer of the half for a 73-72 lead with 2:15 to go. Frye finished with 14 points.

With Frye and Stoudamire tightly guarded, Hassan Adams missed a jumper from the top of the key.

The 5-foot-9 Robinson fearlessly drove inside and scored to put the Huskies ahead 75-72 with 1:07 left.

"Nate always comes up big when the game is on the line," Olson said.

Stoudamire tripped and fell in front of Arizo-



Arizona coach Luke Olson watched in disbelief as his team squandered a six-point lead in the Pac-10 title game. Washington won 81-72.

na's bench, losing the ball out of bounds with 46 seconds left.

Asked if he was tripped, Stoudamire said, "I think so, but obviously the ref didn't. You can't let referees decide the game. We should've been ahead by a lot more."

Olson, with a smile on his face, said he also believed Stoudamire was tripped.

"But so am I to question that call? That one call didn't cost us the game," Olson said.

Then Stoudamire fouled Robinson, who made both free throws, for a 77-72 lead with 34 seconds left. Simmons made two free throws and Stoudamire's jumper bounced off the rim with 26 seconds to go.

Robinson stole the ball at midcourt, was fouled and made both free throws with 19 seconds left.

Aggies end Pacific's 22-game win streak

BY ANDREW DALTON
The Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Utah State left nothing to chance this year.

Left out of the NCAA tournament last season, the Aggies earned the Big West's automatic bid Saturday night with a 65-52 victory over No. 18 Pacific in the championship game of the conference tournament.

Utah State (24-7) ended Pacific's 22-game winning streak to secure its fifth NCAA tournament berth — and its fifth Big West championship — in eight years.

"All I know is we're in," Aggies coach Steve Morrell said. "That's all that matters right now."

Big West freshman of the year Jaycee Carroll led Utah State with 22 points, shooting 9-for-19 from the field, and Spencer Nelson added 16 points.

Top-seeded Pacific (26-3) entered with the nation's longest winning streak and had won 34 straight against Big West teams.

The Tigers' lowest-scoring game of the season featured a 10-minute spell without a field goal in the second half.

Utah State went on a 19-2 run midway through the second half, capped by Carroll's short jumper that put the Aggies up 49-37 with 7:32 to play.

"Each always says the advantage goes to hand aggressor," Carroll said. "I came out tonight and tried to get them back on their heels."

Carroll had no answer for Carroll, "Pacific coach Bob Thomason said. "They deserved to win."

The Tigers' leading scorer, Guillaume Yango, scored just six points and Big West player of the year David Doubleday was held to eight.

The Aggies, who led by as many as 16 in the final minutes, lost twice to Pacific during the regular season and in overtime and the other time by one point after blowing a six-point lead in the final 30 seconds.

"We wanted a chance to play them again and we got our wish," Nelson said. "We took care of business."

Pacific led 29-28 at halftime and scored the first four points of the regular season and made a three-pointer to pull Utah State to 33-33, and the Aggies took the lead at 36-35 with a short jumper with 15:30 to go.

The Tigers had a scoreless stretch in the first half nearly as long as their second-half drought. After Jasko Korajic made a three-pointer to start the game, the Aggies went back to zero 9 minutes without a basket.

The Tigers were expected to get an at-large tournament bid even with a loss Saturday.

"We deserve to go," Thomason said. "No team in the country is 13-1 on the road. Why wouldn't they want us in there?"

Syracuse ends W.Virginia's Big East run

BY JIM O'CONNELL
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — There was no wild celebrating. The nets are still on the rims at Madison Square Garden.

No. 16 Syracuse won its first Big East tournament championship since 1992 on Saturday night with a 68-59 victory over West Virginia. Yet the postgame celebration was off that for a quality regular-season win.

"This was a great tournament win for us, especially for our seniors, to be able to win this thing was a tremendous accomplishment," Syracuse coach Jim Boheim said. "I'm real happy for them."

Why not celebration?
"I don't know," he said. "Maybe it's unfortunate but my mind-set has probably changed — and maybe it shouldn't, but it has. In my mind-set, the only thing that matters is the regular season."

Hakim Warrick had 20 points and 13 rebounds for the Orange, who should be seeded from third

to fifth in the NCAA tournament that starts next week. Warrick, the conference player of the year, was selected the tournament MVP.

The last time Warrick and his teammates cut down the nets was in New Orleans after the 2003 NCAA championship game.

"That's something you want to save for the Final Four, a national championship," he said. "This is a really big thing, a big win, but we definitely want to be cutting down the nets in St. Louis."

The Big East tournament title was something Warrick wanted once he decided to return for his senior season.

"When I came back I thought of this," he said. "Big East player of the year, Big East tournament champion and MVP. I couldn't end my career any better, couldn't have scripted it any better."

The third-seeded Orange (27-9) won the fourth Big East tournament title in their 12th championship game appearance.

The loss ended a history-mak-

ing run for West Virginia (21-10), the first No. 8 seed to reach the championship game. No team had ever won four games to take the title and the Mountaineers fell one game short of winning their first conference championship since winning the Atlantic 10 in 1984.

West Virginia had never gotten past the quarterfinal round before this season. The Mountaineers got past the quarterfinals this time by beating top-seeded Boston College.

"I've been fortunate enough to have multiple times in my life but not four times on this stage," West Virginia coach John Beilein said. "But these kids are going to remember this forever."

Syracuse again used its 2-3 zone defense and Warrick's inside presence to take a big lead. The Orange dominated second-seeded Connecticut in the semifinals that way but just like the game they also lost a big lead slip away.

"Our defense both nights was outstanding," Boheim said. "I

just thought defensively we were really good and offensively we did the things we had to."

Syracuse led Connecticut by 21 points with 12:47 to play and wound up winning 67-63. The Orange opened the second half Saturday night with a 10-2 run to take a 51-33 lead over the Mountaineers with 16:12 left.

But West Virginia finally started hitting three-pointers — the Mountaineers were 35-for-74 the first three games — and the lead was down 55-50 with 8:20 left.

Josh Pace tipped in a miss by Warrick with 4:57 left to make it 59-50 — the first Syracuse points not scored by Warrick in 12 minutes — and West Virginia didn't get closer than eight points the rest of the way.

Gerry McNamara added 16 points and Pace had 13 for the Orange, whose other titles came in 1981 and 1988.

Tyrone Sully had 13 points for the Mountaineers. Mike Gansey, who made two free throws with 0.2 seconds left to beat Villanova in the semifinals, and Joe Herber each added 11 points.

SPORTS



Edwards' flat tire helps
Martin to 47th series
victory, Page 36

McGwire linked to '90s probe

Report: He was not target of federal steroid investigation

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mark McGwire's name was mentioned several times during a federal steroids investigation in the early 1990s, but he was not the target of the probe nor was any evidence collected against him, the Daily News reported Sunday.

McGwire, Jose Canseco and five current players along with four baseball executives were subpoenaed to testify at a congressional hearing on steroids Thursday. The commissioner's office has said it will fight the subpoenas. Canseco says he will testify and has asked for immunity so he can answer all questions; McGwire and some of the other players haven't said whether they'll show in Washington.

Two dealers caught in the federal investi-

gation told the Daily News that a California man named Curtis Wenzlaff gave Canseco and McGwire illegal anabolic steroids.

A spokesman for McGwire, Marc Altieri, told the newspaper the former player does not remember meeting Wenzlaff.

"We're not going to comment on anything at this time," Altieri said, "but we believe one should consider the sources of such allegations."

Canseco said Sunday on ABC's "This Week" he met Wenzlaff in the 1980s and worked out with him but did not buy steroids from him.

When asked by the newspaper, Wenzlaff declined to comment about McGwire but said he did give Canseco steroids.

"I supplied a bunch of players, but I'm

not going to name any other names," Wenzlaff told the Daily News. "Jose's different because he opened the door with his book."

Canseco said in his recently published autobiography that he, McGwire and Giambi shot steroids together in a bathroom stall at Oakland Coliseum.

McGwire and Giambi have denied Canseco's charges.

Canseco said Sunday he thinks a congressional investigation of steroid use in baseball is a good idea and more people should be called to testify.

"If Major League Baseball wanted in the past to completely just sever steroids from Major League Baseball, they would have done it. Obviously, there was so much money to be made," Canseco told "This Week."



Evidence wasn't collected against Mark McGwire during a federal probe, but his name reportedly was mentioned repeatedly.

Cue the music



AP photos

At left, Utah State's Nate Harris (left) and Cass Matheus dance after the Aggies earned an automatic NCAA tournament berth by beating No. 18 Pacific in the final of the Big West tournament in Anaheim, Calif. Above, New Mexico coach Ritchie McKay (front) jumps in front of his players for a team photograph after the Lobos beat Utah 60-56 to claim the Mountain West Conference tournament title in Denver. See conference tournament coverage on Pages 37-39.

Anthony, Bryant keep their teams even in West

Page 35

